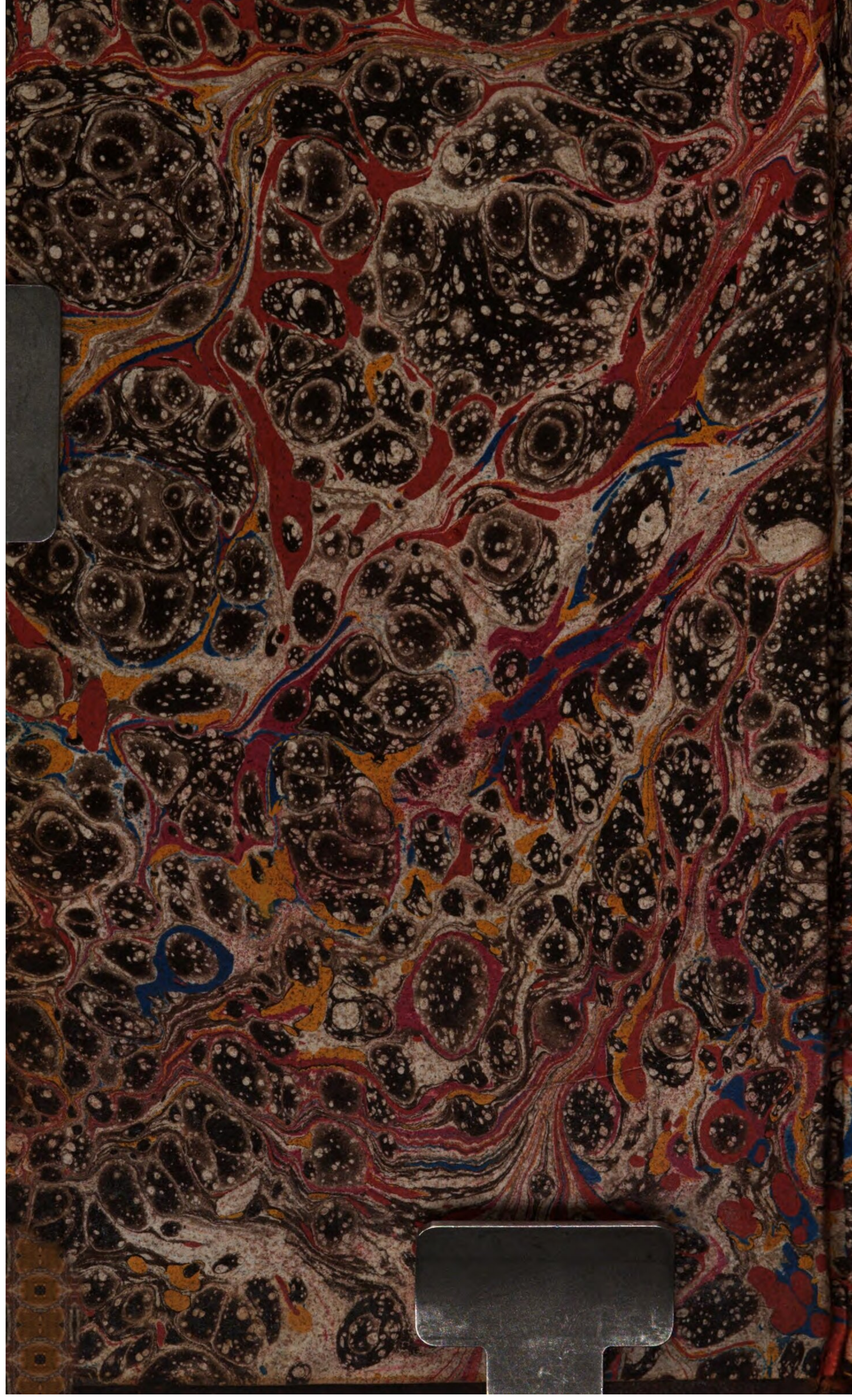




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By ROBERT BISHOP, LL.D.

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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
REIGN OF GEORGE III.

TO THE
TERMINATION OF THE LATE WAR.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A VIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLAND,
IN PROSPERITY AND STRENGTH, TO THE
ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

By ROBERT BISSET, LL.D.
AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF BURKE," &c. &c.

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THE
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BY ROBERT HESSE, LL.D.
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peal of king William's act respecting Roman Catholics.—Supplies.—Ways and means, and taxes.—Motion for an inquiry respecting expenditure—rejected.—Dignified speech of his majesty at the close of the session.

C H A P.
XX.

1777.
Conduct of
France and
Spain.

Changing
sentiments
of the
French.

WHILE Britain was engaged in so momentous a contest, her European neighbours anxiously watched operations and events. France and Spain opened their ports to American ships so early as 1776, and treated the colonists in every respect as an independent people. The laws for prohibiting commerce between Britain and her opponents, ultimately punished only Britain herself: precluded from trade with the parent state, the provincials supplied the deficiency from the markets of our rivals. Not contented with reaping the benefit of the new traffic, the great Bourbon kingdoms abetted the revolvers in their hostilities; their privateers were openly received, and their prizes publicly sold, in the French and Spanish ports. The French furnished the provincials with artillery and all kinds of warlike stores; their engineers and officers carried skill and discipline to the American armies. Two principles prompted our potent neighbours to assist the revolted colonies; the ancient spirit of rivalry determined the court, and the modern sentiments of liberty instigated the people. The literary efforts in the reign of Louis XIV. had been chiefly employed on works of fancy and taste, or of physical research, but now began to take a different direction, and to investigate theological and political philosophy. It required little penetration to perceive, that both the ecclesiastical and civil establishments of France were extremely defective; that

that they nourished superstition instead of true religion, and sought the gratification of the court instead of the welfare of the people. Having discovered these imperfections, many now ran into the contrary extreme: Voltaire, D'Alembert, Helvetius, and, above all, Rousseau, gave the tone to fashionable literature: great numbers of the nobility and gentry became deists and republicans; and as the friends of a commonwealth, they were easily induced to favour the revolters from a monarchical government. Mild, gentle, and indolent, if left to himself, the king would have been little inclined to hostilities; but those who had the greatest influence with him were of a very different character: his queen, Mary Antoniette of Austria, having the enterprising spirit of her mother, was desirous of promoting the glory and power of the crown to which she was affianced, and humbling its rival. The duke de Choiseul, always an enemy to the enterprising rival of France, eagerly promoted the cause of the Americans against England. Sartine, the naval minister, hoped that a war with England, when so much of her strength was employed against her late subjects, would attain his favourite object, the exaltation of the French, and the depression of the British, navy. These dispositions were promoted by the American ambassadors; first, partially by Messrs. Silas Dean and Arthur Lee, and afterwards more effectually and completely by the illustrious Franklin. Having reached the highest distinctions as a natural philosopher, this sage eclipsed the glory of his physical theories by his political practice: patriotically

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1777.

devoted to his native country, he was warmly attached to the British interest, while he considered it as compatible with the welfare of America. He had sojourned many years in the metropolis, and from his extraordinary talents was connected with able men of all ranks: he strenuously deprecated the measures of government, and uniformly foretold that the consequences would be fatal. Finding the proceedings of administration daily more hostile to the colonies, and that no petitions would be received or regarded, he withdrew, to assist his native land, preparing for war, which he now deemed unavoidable. He encouraged her efforts, increased her resources, and presided in arranging her plans and forming her government. Having employed his inventive genius and profound wisdom in providing the means of internal security to his country, he next undertook to procure her the most useful foreign assistance. Arrived in Paris, Franklin was courted by all ranks as the philosopher, the politician, the enemy of England, and the friend of liberty. He succeeded in determining the court of France to a war apparently pregnant with discomfiture and distress to Britain, but destined eventually to recoil on the aggressor. The state of France was at this time favourable to financial resources: in 1776, M. Neckar being placed at the head of the treasury, by his skill and industry so much reduced the national expenditure and improved the revenue, that the king saw himself in a condition to encounter England without subjecting his people to new taxes. Great warlike preparations were carried on during the year 1777; but, as the prophetic

phetic wisdom of Chatham had foretold, France continued to abstain from actual hostility, until the event of the contest with the colonies should be ascertained. Thoroughly informed of the mighty force which Britain was employing in America, from her experience of British valour and conduct she could not reasonably anticipate the ineffectual result of partial success, or the decisive completion of disaster. The hopes of England, she knew from the late campaign, had been extremely sanguine; but they had in no quarter been fulfilled, and in one had entirely been blasted.

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The calamity of Saratoga finally decided the counsels of France; the moment of humiliation and debasement was chosen by the court of Versailles to give a fatal blow to the formidable power of her rival. Spain was no less favourable to the cause of the Americans; but harassed and fatigued by her wars with the barbarians of Africa, though as prone to hostilities with England as the elder branch of the Bourbons, she was not equally prepared for immediate commencement.

Parliament met the 20th of November; at that time intelligence had not been received of the disastrous fate of Burgoyne's expedition, and the progressive advantages of general Howe, with the force under his command, justified the expectation of much more signal and important successes, than those that were actually attained, when the general, instead of pursuing Washington, closed the campaign in the dissipation of Philadelphia. His majesty's speech spoke hope and confidence. Having

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parliament.

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The king's
speech de-
clares the
necessity of
continuing
the war.

afforded his servants the means of victory, the king concluded that they would be employed with effect*.

The powers (he said) committed by parliament to the crown had been faithfully exerted; and he trusted, that the conduct and courage of the officers, with the spirit and intrepidity of the soldiers, would be attended with important success. Persuaded that both houses would see the necessity of preparing for such further operations as the contingencies of the war and the obstinacy of the rebels might render expedient, his majesty was for that purpose pursuing the proper measures for keeping the land-forces complete to their present establishments; if he should have occasion to increase them, a reliance was placed on the zeal and public spirit of parliament to enable him to make the requisite augmentation. Although repeated assurances were received of the pacific disposition of foreign powers, yet, as the armaments in the ports of France and Spain were continued, he judged it advisable to make a considerable addition to our naval force; it being equally the determined resolution of the king not to disturb the peace of Europe, and to be a faithful guardian of the honour of his crown, and the rights of his people. He informed the commons, that the various services which had been mentioned would unavoidably require large supplies; and assured them that nothing could relieve his mind from the concern which it felt for the burdens imposed on his subjects, but a conviction that they were absolutely necessary for their honour and safety. His majesty

* See State Papers 1777.

was resolved to pursue the measures in which they were now engaged for the re-establishment of constitutional subordination, and still hoped that the deluded multitude would return to their duty. The restoration of peace, order, and confidence, to his American colonies, he would consider as the greatest happiness of his life, and the chief glory of his reign. The addresses, as usual, echoed the speech; and their supporters not only justified the measures of government, but expatiated on the *beneficial consequences* which they had produced, and on the flourishing state of public affairs. The opponents of ministers proposed an amendment, requesting his majesty to adopt some measures to accommodate the differences with America; and recommending a cessation of all hostilities, in order to effectuate so desirable a purpose. We were now, they said, in a much worse situation than when we began the war; fifty thousand land-forces, a hundred ships of war, and thirty millions of increased debt, had not advanced the attainment of our object. Ministers had asserted that we were fighting *for a revenue*, and thus had deluded the country gentlemen and others into an approval of their system: was the accumulation of mortgages the means of meliorating income*? The ministerial assertions concerning the prosperity of the nation were totally unfounded in truth. The loss of our American trade was in itself such a diminution of opulence and strength, as must have severely and visibly affected the greatest and wealthiest state that ever existed; but when to this was added the consequent ruin brought on our West

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Debates on
the address.

* See Parliamentary Debates 1777.

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Lord Chat-
ham takes
an active
part in par-
liament,

India islands, the annihilation of our Mediterranean, African, and Levant commerce, with the failure of our fisheries, arising from the same cause, could our circumstances be justly said to be flourishing? The depreciation of landed estates, the rise of interest, the fall of stocks, and the multiplicity of bankruptcies, were barometers which plainly indicated the commercial and political fall of British prosperity. Were these the documents from which ministers could evince the truth of their position? If such already were the consequences of the contest with our colonies only, what were we to expect when the house of Bourbon contributed its combined strength and resources? Let parliament reflect on the situation to which they had brought the country by their support of ministerial counsels, and change a system so often demonstrated to be pernicious, but of which the mischiefs had far exceeded the predictions of warning wisdom. The earl of Chatham took a very active share in adducing and supporting these arguments; and whereas ministers insisted that both the honour and interest of Great Britain required perseverance, he denied that it was truly honourable to persist in a hopeless undertaking, or advantageous to seek an impracticable object by destructive means. Such was the reasoning by which the celebrated orators and statesmen* of opposition simplified and exhibited the state of the country and the conduct of administration, in order to shew that, to recover our former greatness, it was necessary to abandon those measures by which our

* See speeches of Fox, Burke, and Chatham, with others, in the debate.

distresses had been incurred. They were, however, unavailing; the proposed amendments were rejected, and the addresses carried by considerable majorities, though not so great as those which had voted with the minister at the commencement of the war. In the house of commons especially, the country gentlemen began to perceive, that the promises of American revenue to relieve them from their burdens, were so far from being realised, that the imposts were rapidly accumulating: they indeed did not vote against ministry, but were very cold in their support.

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One of the first acts of the session was a renewal of the law for detaining suspected persons. In discussing this proposition, the opponents of administration contended, that as its principle was unconstitutional, so its operation had been found to be useless: in fact, no occasion had occurred for carrying it into effect. Ministers argued, that its cause, the American rebellion, still continued, and thereby rendered its renewal necessary; it had been originally intended less to punish, than to prevent treason. The circumstance from which opposition endeavoured to demonstrate its uselessness, really arose from its preventive efficacy: disaffected men were by the fears of this law restrained from acting according to their dispositions, by abetting and cherishing revolt. The law was renewed. From the debate with which the session commenced to the Christmas recess, the great object of opposition was inquiry into the state of the nation. After several incidental and prelusive debates, the conduct of this momentous question was undertaken

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Mr. Fox
moves an
inquiry
into the state
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tion,

by the comprehensive genius of Mr. Fox. The penetrating and expansive understanding of this extraordinary man conceived and proposed a plan adequate to the magnitude of the object. “ It was
“ useless (he said) to waste time in vain declamation ;
“ let us establish general facts by an accurate in-
“ duction of particulars. The great question con-
“ cerning the propriety of perseverance in the
“ American war, depends on the experience which
“ we already possess, and a calculation of the
“ means which remain to the nation for the attain-
“ ment of this favourite object.” The principal premises of his projected investigation he reduced to the following general heads : 1st, the expences of the war, and the resources which the nation possessed to raise the supplies necessary for its continuance ; 2dly, the loss of men from that war ; 3dly, the situation of trade, both with respect to America and the foreign markets ; 4thly, the present condition of the war, the hopes that might be rightly entertained from its continuance, the conduct and measures of the present administration, the means of obtaining a lasting peace, and our present state with regard to foreign powers ; 5thly, what progress the commissioners had made, in consequence of the powers with which they were entrusted for the purpose of bringing about a peace between Great Britain and her colonies. These inquiries would include a great variety of questions, and would demand the production of a multiplicity of documents. If, he said, on fully exploring our situation, it should appear dangerous and disgraceful, and to have arisen from the mis-
conduct

conduct of ministers, a new set must be necessarily appointed; but if, on the other hand, the state of the country be flourishing and glorious, as its advantages and splendor are confessedly owing to the present ministers, they must be supported. By inquiry only can it be ascertained what our condition is, and how far their conduct has been wise or foolish. The more complete the communication of documents may be, the more thoroughly can we estimate the merit or demerit of ministers. If they are conscious that their measures are right, they will court discussion; if they are aware they are wrong, they will either oppose a scrutiny, or endeavour to defeat its purpose by garbled or imperfect information. Lord North easily perceived, that such strong reasoning could not be directly controverted; and that, on the other hand, the admission of the proposition in its full extent would be neither expedient nor agreeable to administration; he therefore endeavoured to please both parties. He professed to support Mr. Fox's motion. It would, he said, afford ministers an opportunity of justifying their conduct, and proving the nation to be in a flourishing state: he wished, however, to reserve to himself the right of withholding such papers from the house, as it might be inconvenient, dangerous, or prejudicial to government, to expose. Mr. Fox readily perceived the object and latitude of this discretionary exception, and soon put the real intentions of ministry to the test. A multiplicity of papers being at his instance produced, he proposed that they should be referred to a committee of the whole house, which should sit two months after that

which is allowed under certain restrictions.

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that day, on the 2d of February, to afford time for the production of the required papers, lists, and accounts. These propositions being carried, he moved for an address to his majesty, for copies of all the papers relative to steps taken in conformity to the prohibitory act of 1776, for granting peace to those who should submit to the king's authority. The minister saw that the object of this motion was to prove that the prohibitory act had estranged the colonies, as opposition had predicted, instead of conciliating them, as ministers had prophesied. He therefore vehemently opposed the motion, as tending to produce discoveries which would be unwise and prejudicial to the country. Without proving this assertion, he repeated it with such a variety of illustration, as by many members was received for proof; and the papers were withheld. In the house of peers, however, very much to the surprise of both parties in the commons, on a similar motion, the required papers were ordered, without a debate. From this grant of the ministerial lords, of what was refused by their colleagues in the other house, opposition conceived the grounds of their opinions strengthened, respecting the want of concert among the members of administration.

News arrives of the disaster at Saratoga.

But the arrival of intelligence from America soon presented the state of the nation in a more dismal light, than the sagacity of a Fox, a Burke, or a Chatham, had anticipated. On the 3d of December, dispatches were received at the secretary of state's office, announcing the fate of the northern army. Uncertain rumours being spread in the course of the morning, as soon as parliament met the secretary

tary was questioned respecting the intelligence. Rising up slowly from his seat, he, in a low voice and sorrowful accent, acknowledged that general Burgoyne and his army were prisoners of war. For a considerable time after the fatal tidings were delivered, a dead silence overspread the house; shame, consternation, and dismay, from the declared issue of their boasted armaments, did not more closely enchain the tongues of the promoters of the war, than astonishment and grief at so signal a calamity overwhelmed the thoughts, feelings, and utterance of their opponents. The stillness, however, of amazement and grief at length gave way to the loudness of lament and the fury of indignation. All the charges and censures that ever had been or could be adduced, were repeated and accumulated against the authors of a war so unjust in principle, and so inexpedient in policy; against conductors so deficient in wisdom of plan, vigour of execution, and skilful and effectual application of the multifarious resources allowed them by the misplaced confidence of parliament, and the credulity of the country. As ministers, it was said, they displayed gross ignorance, despicable incapacity, and infatuated obstinacy, in all and every part of their measures. After having, by a long and uniform series of mismanagement and folly, brought their country from exaltation to distress, they crowned the mischief of their system by a most dreadful disaster. This ruinous expedition flowed entirely from the same source as the whole of their pernicious system; confidence in false reports and gross exaggeration, which could not once, much less repeatedly and even constantly,

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have imposed upon understandings in the smallest degree discriminating, unless they had been blinded by their wishes. The secretary had projected the northern expedition in his closet. Sitting in Westminster, he ventured to direct, not only the general operations, but the particular movements of an army traversing the deserts of America: there were rumours that the inhabitants of Albany would co-operate with the British army, and ministers had formed their Canadian plan, according to their usual practice, on implicit faith in idle reports. A junction, it had been said, was designed between the armies of generals Burgoyne and Howe. To effect this purpose by sea would have been easy, but by land would have occupied a whole campaign: before the armies could have joined, the season for united exertions must have been past. General Howe, instead of co-operating with Burgoyne, was ordered to betake himself to the south; and Burgoyne and his brave soldiers being commanded to advance into the wilds of the enemy's country, had fallen a sacrifice to the ill-advised directions of ministers.

Different
conduct of
lords North
and Ger-
maine.

Lord North, in the mildness of his disposition, acknowledged miscarriage, but deprecated blame; his intention had been to promote the honour and interest of his country; he had counselled, and acted, according to the best of his judgment; he had always been the adviser and promoter of peace, and would gladly relinquish his office, if his resignation would facilitate its honourable attainment. He had been forced into a situation of the highest responsibility by the circumstances of the times and obedience to his sovereign, and had not accepted the

the appointment from choice. He had found American affairs in a state which he by no means approved : from the dispositions of the Americans, he saw the difficulty, danger, and unproductiveness of taxation, and had therefore proposed and carried a clause of repeal ; in his subsequent measures, he had been driven by the force of circumstances, instead of being led by his own deliberate approbation. This gentle reply, which was better calculated to disarm resentment than to confute argument, diminished the asperity of invective, without weakening the efforts of reasoning. Whatever his motives or wishes might be (said his censurers), the measures actually proposed by him, and adopted through his ministerial influence with such obstinacy of perseverance, notwithstanding the repeated and uniform warnings that he had received, had in four years brought enormous debt, flagrant disgrace, and direful calamity on his country. If, therefore, his intentions were so pure and faultless as he represented, he incurred a charge of incapacity, which ought immediately to deprive him of his situation.

Lord George Germaine was not so explicit as his colleague ; he merely requested the house should suspend its judgment, until the facts were properly examined. He also insinuated, that the conduct of the minister and general should undergo a scrutiny, before a just and accurate opinion could be formed. This observation being construed to imply censure against the absent general, revived the flame of rage which the mildness of lord North had cooled ; and produced acrimonious violence, with personal retrospections,

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specifications, totally irrelevant to any business before the house.

Earl Chatham frequently attended in parliament this session, which was destined to be his last: he moved on the 5th of December, that copies of all the orders issued to Burgoyne relative to the northern expedition, should be laid before the house. After pouring out his eloquence against the pernicious system, blunders, and miscarriages of ministry, the spirit of delusion, he said, had gone forth; the ministers had imposed on the people, parliament had been induced to sanction the imposition, and false lights had been held out to the country gentlemen: by a promised diminution of tax, they had been seduced to the support of a most destructive war; but the visionary phantom, which had been thus conjured up for the basest deception, was now to about vanish, and the conduct of ministers ought to be probed. His lordship's motion, eloquently and forcibly as it was supported, was carried in the negative. On the 10th of December, Mr. Wilkes proposed a repeal of the obnoxious laws. Opposition gave him little support; it was now, they conceived, too late to expect conciliation from such a tardy concession, and measures must be adopted more seasonable in the existing circumstances. On the 11th of December, an adjournment to the 20th of January was moved and carried, contrary to the strenuous remonstrances of opposition, who, in a situation of such emergency, were extremely inimical to so early and long a recess; and ministers employed this interval in forming and arranging measures adapted to the present reverse of fortune.

The

The loss of the northern army appeared to have entirely counteracted the schemes of administration for subjugating America. The advantages obtained under general Howe, were far from being decisive; he had taken towns, but had not conquered the enemy's troops. No additional forces could be expected from the German princes, and it would be with difficulty that their corps in our service would be recruited to their full complement. The bad success which had already attended our efforts, was very inimical to the increase, or even separation, of our armies from our own country. These actual difficulties were enhanced by expected dangers; the conduct of the house of Bourbon was so openly, and, indeed, so glaringly adverse to Britain, that war appeared probable, if not certain. In such circumstances, many, not inimical to ministers, conceived, that perseverance in our attempts would be infatuated obstinacy, instead of magnanimous firmness, and expected that they would desist from such an hopeless enterprise: but these expectations were totally disappointed; it was resolved to persist in the system of compulsion. Lord North was desirous of offering some terms of conciliation; but he agreed with his colleagues, that if these did not produce the intended effect, it was incumbent on Britain to persist in her plans of force. And if this determination be not altogether consonant to political wisdom, it was perfectly conformable to the general series of ministerial conduct. From a review of the measures and proceedings for the last four years, it is evident that they had not considered the great subject of

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their thoughts and policy so comprehensively and acutely, as to examine, compare, and estimate the value of the object, with the trouble, expence, and danger of the means, but narrowed their thoughts to the probability of success. Continuing this imperfect and partial mode of appretiation, they still entertained hopes that they might ultimately prevail. The force which they had furnished was, they alleged, sufficient for the object, if it had been properly employed. Much more effectual advances might have been made by an army so powerful, and so well supplied, against such an inferior enemy. By wise and judicious efforts, the British army, if properly recruited and repaired, must be victorious; but, although the necessity of raising a considerable body of new troops was, on this ground of policy, sufficiently evident, the means were not so obvious. The late misfortune, and the little apparent room for hope, which now remained, of bettering our condition by force, allowed no encouragement for an application to parliament; the ministers, therefore, had recourse to the persons and classes who had shewn the greatest eagerness in the prosecution of the American war, and professed to afford them an opportunity of testifying their peculiar attachment and loyalty to the crown. They proposed, that individuals and corporations should raise regiments, and being allowed the bounty-money given by government in the time of peace, should defray the recruiting expences beyond that sum; in return for which, the contracting parties should have the appointment of the officers, who, it was not doubted, would

would willingly undertake to levy a number proportioned to their respective commissions; such a quota of men would make up the requisite supply. In the former war, Mr. Pitt had experienced many important advantages from Scotch highlanders. Actuated by a mistaken zeal, these courageous, hardy, and enterprising mountaineers had twice struck terror into the bravest British veterans, and the most populous parts of England; but had shewn, in Flanders, Germany, and America, that, when properly instructed and guided, they could fight as well for their king and country, as, when misinformed and misled, they had fought against our constitutional law and government. Part of the present plan was, to bring great bodies of highlanders into his majesty's service. Of a migratory and adventurous disposition, and, in those days of unimproved agriculture, possessing scanty means of livelihood, those men were much more inclined to the military profession, than people in richer countries, and of stationary habits. Besides, there had been a succession of cold and withering seasons, which had greatly diminished their usual resources from pasturage. Distress combined with courage and the spirit of adventure, to dispose them to be soldiers. In addition to these motives, another principle was addressed; the attachment of the peasantry to the chieftains, so prevalent in all feudal countries; and which, in the highlands, combined patriarchal with feignorial relations. The noblemen, and other chiefs of the greatest power and influence, undertook to raise regiments. From the north, the Mackenzies

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brought two thousand, and the Gordons one ; from the north-west and the isles, the Macdonalds brought one thousand ; from the west, the duke of Argyle two thousand ; from the south-west, the duke of Hamilton one thousand ; and from the southern frontiers of the highlands, the duke of Athol one thousand. To this powerful support from the landed proprietors, commercial wealth added its efforts : the city of Edinburgh raised a regiment equally numerous and well-appointed as the others ; nor was Glasgow, though she had suffered very much from the American contest, behind her eastern neighbour. In England, Manchester and Liverpool preceded other mercantile towns, in performing the same service. But, in order to render the efforts of monied opulence generally employed and extensively beneficial, it was ardently wished, though not so sanguinely hoped, that London would take the lead ; the city and corporation were not, indeed, so violently inimical to the court, as they had been some years before ; of the popular leaders, some were dead, and others had, from various causes, lost much of their former influence. The general sentiment was not so completely changed, as to give ministers a majority in the municipal councils of the metropolis : sir James Esdaile, the lord mayor, was friendly to administration ; but his authority was not sufficiently great to determine the livery ; and his motion for corporate efforts to recruit his majesty's forces, was negatived. A private association, however, was formed, to collect the contributions of individuals, and considerable sums were raised.

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raised. The same mode was adopted at Bristol, with proportionate effect. In various parts of England similar attempts were made, but with trifling success: the great source of contribution, confidence in the ministers that were to dispose of the product, appeared to be most frequently wanting. The troops levied in this manner amounted to about fifteen thousand men, ten thousand of whom were raised in Scotland.

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The propriety of voluntary levies and contributions is discussed in parliament.

When parliament assembled after the recess, the contributions by individuals or bodies, for repairing the exhausted army, were represented by opposition as illegal and unconstitutional; illegal, because men and money had been raised without consent of parliament; unconstitutional, because such levies were indefinite as to number, and might be employed to deprive the country of its liberties. The law lords, and commoners connected with administration, argued, that the king, by his prerogative, was empowered to levy men, and to raise an army. When the new levies were reported to parliament, it was the duty of that body, if they approved of the measure, to provide for their subsistence; if otherwise, to refuse a supply, which, in effect, would disband the troops. The money raised was offered by individuals and bodies, who had a right to present their own money to the king as well as to any other person. Voluntary contributions of either men or money, or both, had been frequently offered in times of emergency; as for instance, in the rebellion of 1745, and the beginning of the seven years war, which were highly approved by men most distinguished

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for attachment to the constitution ; in the former of these æras, by the lord chancellor Hardwicke ; and the latter, by Mr. secretary Pitt. That the offers of individuals, in times of national difficulty, to contribute their utmost efforts, either by men or money, to the extrication of their country, were not laudable, and ought not to be received, opposition leaders were too able to affirm: without discussing the general principle, they endeavoured to prove, that the cases were totally different; and that the only means of relief from our present calamities was, to abandon coercive measures, and withdraw our troops from America. But, if the augmentation was at all necessary, it should have been effected by filling up the old regiments to their full complement ; which would be both more conducive to military discipline, by attaching new recruits to veterans ; and more economical, by saving immediately the pay, and ultimately the half-pay, of the officers. The mode now adopted, raised many gentlemen of no experience, to appointments fit only for veteran officers. The distribution of military trust bore much more the appearance of ministerial jobs to increase their patronage, than the policy of statesmen to strengthen the national force. These objections being canvassed by the supporters of administration, the question was proposed for granting the sums that were required for the new troops, and carried in the affirmative.

The time appointed for inquiring into the state of the nation now drawing near, various motions were made for the presentment of papers ; especially the
instruc-

instructions given to the generals in America; the correspondence that had passed between the commanders respectively; and also for accounts of the troops, artillery, and stores, which were in the various parts of America in the beginning of 1774, or sent thither since that time. The papers required, were either not produced at all, or so imperfectly, as to withhold in a great degree the desired information. From the materials however, incomplete as they were, Mr. Fox attempted to establish one great proposition; not only the expediency, but the absolute necessity, of bringing the American war to the speediest possible conclusion; and of restoring harmony, upon a broad and equitable foundation, between the mother-country and her colonies. He comprehended and exhibited in one view, the whole series of ministerial counsels; the detail of means, and the particulars and amount of the result: ministers, he argued, and the majority in parliament, and had preferred coercive to conciliatory measures; in consequence of that preference, Britain had gone to war with America; that war had lasted a certain number of years, had been prosecuted with a specified force by sea and land, attended with a stated expence of money and lives, and our utmost efforts in three years had not produced any material advantage. The army of Britain, in the course of hostilities, had been much more numerous and strong, and the army of the enemy less numerous and weaker, than they were at present: it was nearly impossible to place our troops in America on the same relative footing to the forces of the colonies, with these which had already

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and inference,

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failed; and, after the repeated and continued failure of a very great force, we could not, consistently with probability and common sense, succeed with a much smaller. He enumerated the details of expence incurred by the war, stated the resources of the country, and denied that the nation could support* the continuance, much less the increase of expence, which perseverance in coercion would demand: repeating, in detail, the various political measures of government, from the Boston port bill downwards, he contended, that they had so much alienated the minds of the Americans, that a much greater army would have been necessary to reduce them to submission, than Britain had sent, or could send. Ministers had not assisted force by policy: negotiations, it is true, had been tried, but the obnoxious laws, rejection of petitions, and the very overtures themselves, had rendered them unavailing. From this chain of positions he inferred, that it would be impossible to reduce America by arms; and our situation respecting France, made it necessary to employ a strong force for the security of our own country, and of our garrisons in Europe. He moved, therefore, that the committee should address his majesty, that no part of the old established national forces in

* An impartial reader may probably disapprove of Mr. Fox's circumscription of the possible resources of his country: as, in the first place, erroneous in point of fact, since they were soon found equal to much greater expenditure; and, secondly, not proper to be publicly declared. Disagreement of opinion, however, concerning the general extent, is perfectly compatible with the most exact co-incidents of judgment, concerning the impolicy of employing any part of them in an attempt to subjugate America, after the disaster at Saratoga.

these

these kingdoms, or in the garrisons of Gibraltar or Minorca, should be sent to America. To the great surprise of the public, no answer was made either to the speech or motion; the question being called for without a debate, Mr. Fox's proposition was rejected by a majority of two hundred and fifty-nine to one hundred and sixty-five.

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which is re-
jected.

From the silence of ministers, it was conceived that a new scheme was in agitation respecting America, which determined them to abstain from that subject, until they should be ready to lay their plans before parliament. While the public was anxiously expecting the result of ministerial deliberations, Mr. Fox proposed, and explained to the committee on the state of the nation, twelve motions, framed agreeably to the principles and outlines which he had already stated and drawn. Their object was, to particularise the force employed, the numbers lost, the sums expended, and progress made; and to establish, as a general position, that, in every view of this improvident and destructive war, they should bear constantly in mind, that, besides our having suffered such disgraces in its progress as this country never before experienced, all those thousands of lives, and millions of money, had not only been thrown away to no manner of purpose, but that, on the contrary, the vast expence of blood and treasure had rendered conciliation much more difficult, and consequently our situation as a nation infinitely worse, than if the sword had never been drawn. Ministers objected to the several motions, as tending to disclose our situation to the enemy, and being in other respects hurtful to the country.

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Mr. Burke's
motion on
the employ-
ment of In-
dians.

country. Resolutions of a similar import were moved in the house of peers by the duke of Richmond, and experienced the same fate.

In reviewing the conduct of the war, Mr. Burke moved an inquiry into the employment of the Indians. Detailing the horrid massacres of these savages with all his animation and force of description, he contended, that the infliction of individual pain, more than the political annoyance of their enemies, was their object; and thence argued, that their mode of hostility was not conducive to the purposes of civilized nations engaged in a war; these not being torment, but reduction and pacification. Nothing but necessity could excuse the employment of such savage warriors; the reasons that were in force in the war between the French and English, did not now exist. The Indian tribes had formerly been powerful states, relatively to the European settlers; it was then necessary to cultivate amity with them, in order to prevent their murderous incursions; but now their numbers were reduced, and there remained no motive or reason for seeking their alliance. To the purposes of conquest or coercion, they were totally inefficacious; their employers might, through them, obtain partial butchery, but could derive no important advantage: on the appearance of danger, they would immediately desert every other commander, as they had abandoned Burgoyne. The employment of the savages was also farther objectionable as a measure of œconomy, one Indian soldier cost as much as five of the best regular troops; even, therefore, were their mode of warfare unexceptionable in other respects, the service did

did not nearly repay the expence. It was said by ministers, that if we had not employed the Indians, the Americans would have employed them against us: but there was no proof that they ever entertained any such intention; and if they had, the cruelty would not have been so destructive against regular embodied soldiers, who could so easily repel those undisciplined murderers, as against scattered and defenceless women and children. The attempt also to incite an insurrection of the negro slaves in the southern colonies, he reprobated, as equally barbarous and impolitic, as farther irritating the Americans by the attempt, and being in the execution ineffectual; and the motion, after a long debate, was negatived.

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Lord North had frequently afforded ground for an opinion that he was by no means so eager for coercive measures, as some of his colleagues. He had made several attempts to produce conciliatory plans, and had shewn himself not indisposed to concession, until he was recalled by his co-adjutors to the coercive tone of the court*. Although, in compliance with the more obstinate and imperious members of the cabinet, he expressed a determination to persevere in the attempt, agreeably to his own disposition as well as to the policy which his judgment approved, he once more made a conciliatory essay, and on the 17th of February 1778 he proposed to the house of commons a plan for that purpose. He repeated his uniform conviction of the inefficiency of American taxation as a measure of finance; and thereby virtually, though not ex-

Lord
North's plan
of negotia-
tion with the
colonies.

* See this History, vol. ii. chap. xiv. & passim.

pressly,

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precisely, acknowledged the false reasoning of those colleagues or supporters who proposed by war with America to increase our revenue. He had wished to keep the discussion of taxation as a right as much as possible out of parliament, being convinced that its exercise would neither be productive nor expedient. Circumstances and events had forced the subject upon the legislature, and the uncomplying conduct of the colonists had rendered war unavoidable. The success of the hostilities had been totally different from what the country had reason to expect, from the great, well appointed, and amply-provided force, which had been furnished by government. In the whole course of the last campaign, sir William Howe, in the number and goodness of his troops, and all manner of supplies, had been hitherto much superior to the army of Washington. General Burgoyne, until the disaster of Bennington, was nearly twice as strong as Gates. The issue of this expedition was totally different from the expectations that were reasonably formed; but to events, and not to hopes, their plans must be adapted. He moved to bring in two bills, one to declare the intentions of parliament concerning the exercise of the right of taxing America; and another, to enable his majesty to appoint commissioners for quieting the disorders now subsisting in the colonies. Five commissioners were to be appointed, any three of whom were empowered to treat with the congress, or any other assembly of men, and even with individuals in America, concerning grievances existing in the government of the colonies, or in the laws of Great Britain that extended

extended to them ; and contributions, or any other regulations which might be for the common good of both countries ; with a proviso, however, that such agreements should not be binding until ratified by parliament. The commissioners were to be invested with absolute power for proclaiming a cessation of hostilities by sea and land, opening an intercourse with the mother-country, suspending the operation of all acts of parliament relating to the North American colonies passed since the 10th of February 1763, and granting pardons to every description of persons.

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In viewing these propositions of lord North, one remark is very obvious : if the measure now offered was right, it ought to have been adopted sooner ; either the minister evinced want of knowledge and wisdom, in incurring the danger and expence of war without an adequate object ; or want of firmness and perseverance, in too readily succumbing under misfortune. To wise and magnanimous nations, the hour of distress is not the hour of submission ; and the present offers, after the threats and denunciations of ministers, were very naturally and fairly construed to be the concessions of discomfited boasting. Very mortifying it was to the feeling of every patriotic Briton, that his country, which had so often dictated to the most powerful nations of Europe, and had lately, under the auspices of Pitt, acquired such greatness and glory, was now so far changed and humiliated as to be the solicitor of peace from her recent subjects : galling, indeed, these reflections were to the generous pride of patriotism ; it was, however, the province of wisdom to attend less

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less to feeling, than to real interest. If it be the highest office of prudence to avoid, in any material case, error of judgment conducive to prejudicial conduct, its employment next in importance is recantation and reform. Dearly purchased experience had taught us, that coercion would not succeed, at least without sacrifices greater than the value of the object; conciliation was therefore expedient. But the proposed system bore the general character of its author, wishing to please all parties, and satisfying none; defeating the purposes of benevolent disposition and acute understanding, by the want of firmness of temper. It was stamped with the same mixture of natural conciliation and adventitious coercion, the same imperfectness of comprehension, which, in the commencing act of its ministry, after proposing the repeal of the other obnoxious duties, reserved the three-penny tax upon tea.

The speech with which his lordship introduced his plan, and the propositions themselves, were heard with profound attention, but without marks of approbation from any party, class, or individual in the house. The minister declared, that his present sentiments were those which he had always entertained, and an accurate and minute examiner of his conduct and character could discover, that the change here supposed was perfectly conformable to the uniform tenor of his indecision and fluctuation. But the greater number of his hearers had attended to acts, rather than to the mind and circumstances in which they originated, and though surpris'd at his plan, wondered much more at the declarations by which it was prefaced. He had

had been considered by parliament, and represented to the nation, as the person the most tenacious of those rights which he was now willing to resign, and the most averse from that submission which he now proposed to offer. The minister received the earliest support from those who had most vigorously combated his preceding measures, but expressed their fears that the concessions were too late, and that they had waited till France had probably completed a treaty with the American provinces; they would, however, vote for any scheme that tended to reconciliation. The principal bill underwent various animadversions from the usual supporters of the minister. After several material corrections and modifications, it passed in both houses without a division. After its amendments being expressed, the new bill was as follows: "An act for removing all doubts and apprehensions concerning taxation by the parliament of Great Britain, in any of the colonies, provinces, and plantations in North America and the West Indies; and for repealing so much of an act, made in the seventh year of the reign of his present majesty, as imposes a duty on tea imported from Great Britain into any colony or plantation in America, or relates thereto." The second bill, which was a corollary from the first, passed with little opposition. The commissioners were, the commander in chief, lord Howe, the earl of Carlisle, William Eden esq. and governor Johnstone. The able and learned Adam Ferguson was secretary to the mission.

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In the beginning of March, the duke of Grafton informed the peers, that he had received well-attested intel-

Hostile intimations
from France.

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intelligence, that a treaty was concluded and actually signed between France and America; and demanded from ministers, either an acknowledgment, or denial, of this important act. Lord Weymouth, secretary of state for the southern department, protested that he had heard no account of such alliance being formed, or even intended: but within a week after this declaration, a message was delivered to each house by the respective ministers, to the following effect: “ His majesty having been informed, by order of the French king, that a treaty of amity and commerce has been signed between the court of France and certain persons employed by his majesty’s revolted subjects in North America, has judged it necessary to direct, that a copy of the avowal delivered by the French ambassador to lord viscount Weymouth be laid before parliament; and at the same time to acquaint them, that his majesty has thought proper, in consequence of this offensive communication on the part of France, to send orders to his minister to withdraw from that court: his majesty is persuaded, that the justice and good faith of his conduct towards foreign powers, and the sincerity of his wishes to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, will be acknowledged by all the world; and his majesty trusts that he shall not stand responsible for the disturbance of tranquillity, if he should find himself called upon to resent so unprovoked and so unjust an aggression on the honour of his crown, and the essential interests of his kingdom, contrary to the most solemn assurances, subversive of the law of nations, and injurious to the rights of every sovereign power in Europe. His majesty re-
lying

lying with the firmest confidence on the zealous and affectionate support of his faithful people, is determined to be prepared to exert all the force and resources of his kingdoms, which he trusts will be found adequate to repel every insult and attack; and to maintain and uphold the power and reputation of his country. The minister moved an address to the throne, which, besides conforming to the principal positions of the message, declared the strongest indignation and resentment at the unjust and unprovoked conduct of France, arising from that restless and dangerous spirit of ambition and aggrandizement which had so often invaded the rights and threatened the liberties of Europe. It concluded with the strongest assurances of the most zealous assistance and support, and declared the firmest confidence that the whole nation would contribute every possible exertion for the honour and dignity of the crown, and the just rights and essential interests of these kingdoms.

In the house of commons an amendment was proposed, that his majesty should remove from his councils those ministers, in whom, from experience of the pernicious effects of their past measures, his people could place no confidence in the present momentous situation of public affairs. The chief arguments for the amendment were, that it would be extremely foolish, and no less dangerous, to confide the management of the most arduous war in which Britain had ever engaged, to ministers whose conduct had been a series of ignorance, rashness, and weakness, and had already brought the country, from a high pitch of power and glory, to its present

Proposition
for the re-
moval of
ministers.

Arguments
for it:

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humiliation and distress; who, having found the kingdom in peace, by their counsels and measures had changed that state of happiness and prosperity into all the horrors and mischiefs of an unnatural, cruel, and destructive civil war; and whose ignorance and obstinacy, disdaining all warning, had plunged this nation into all its present danger and calamity*.

There could not be a more glaring or criminal instance of ministerial negligence and imbecility, than that, in times of peace, they could not discover the designs and transactions of France, until they were openly avowed. Ministers had shewn themselves totally unfit for managing our affairs; therefore they ought not to be trusted with the conduct of greater and more difficult situations. The enemy presumed on the notorious weakness and instability which had long characterized the British counsels. They knew, that if the ministers had been pensioners of France, they could not have promoted the interest of that country more effectually, than they had actually done. It would be useless to offer any support to his majesty, without informing him at the same time of the incapacity of those to whom he had entrusted the management of public affairs. After such repeated instances of folly, neglect, and incapacity, the nation could repose no confidence in his present ministers; and their removal alone could realize any offers of support, and revive the drooping spirit of the people. That single measure would strike more terror into the enemies of this country, than all the warlike preparations which we were capable of making under the present no-

* Parliamentary reports.

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against it,

torious imbecility of our councils and conduct. Against these arguments the minister and his friends did not offer refutations equally strong; but they contented themselves with asserting their conduct to have been unblamable, and the best which the state of affairs could possibly admit; and repeated their asseverations, of the flourishing state of the country, and its ability to defend itself, and inflict punishment on our enemies for their unprovoked attack. The course of the debate brought forward the question of American independence, and manifested that diversity of opinion on the subject between certain members of opposition, which had before begun to discover itself, and eventually rendered them distinct and even opposite parties. By a part of opposition, the immediate acknowledgment of the independence of America was considered not only as the wisest, but the only measure which could extricate us from the present evils, without still greater losses, and with any probable prospect of deriving future advantage from our colonies. This was the opinion held by the duke of Richmond, the marquis of Rockingham, Messrs. Burke, Fox, and other members of that party; but the earls Chatham, Temple, and Shelburne, and lord Camden, Messrs. Dunning and Barre, with some other members of both houses, were totally averse from the independence of America. Such a concession they considered as the greatest of all political and national evils, and as including the utter degradation and final ruin of Britain. The other division of opposition admitted the evils to be great, but not equal to those which must be incurred in endea-

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Mr. Fox
proposes an
inquiry
into the
state of the
nation.

vouring to prevent its completion, and thought that no effort for that purpose would be ultimately successful.

After the hostile declaration of France, the inquiry into the state of the nation was principally directed to the condition of the navy. On the 11th of March, Mr. Fox having taken a view of our naval force in the various harbours of this country and the different stations abroad, as the result of the whole proposed a motion, importing that the public had paid, in the last eight years, for the ordinaries and extraordinaries of the navy, though the greater part of that period was free from hostilities, about double the sum to which the estimates for the same service amounted in the eight years commencing with 1755 and ending with 1762, which included the whole of the late war; and that, notwithstanding the immense increase of cost, the present naval force of Great Britain and Ireland was inadequate to the very dangerous crisis of public affairs. Ministers neither endeavoured to confute the assertions, nor to overturn the arguments, of their formidable adversary: the force which they could not combat, they endeavoured to elude; the motion, they said, was impolitic, as it tended to expose to the enemy the state and disposition of our maritime strength; and, by this common objection, they prevailed on parliament to stifle inquiry.

His inquiry
into the
plans and
prepara-
tions of the
Canada ex-
pedition.

The great statesman of opposition having failed in his endeavour to investigate the future efficiency of our fleets, was not deterred from prosecuting his inquiries, which he now turned to the past direction and

and conduct of our armies, and on the 19th of March he proposed to the committee the consideration of the Canada expedition. He undertook to demonstrate that the plan was impolitic, unwise, and incapable of producing any good effect; that the provision made for it was inadequate to the object, and that general Burgoyne had acted agreeably to the tenor of his instructions: if he established these three positions, (he said) he would deduce from them a motion concerning the conduct of lord George Germaine. The ministers opposed the inquiry chiefly for the same reason that they had resisted a former attempt of a similar tendency, the absence of one of the parties; they, however, entered more into the actual merits of the plan than on the preceding occasion, and endeavoured to prove that the northern expedition was, in the first place, a wise and necessary measure; that it was capable of success, and the design evidently practicable; and that the noble secretary, in whose department it lay, had omitted nothing which could be done by an attentive minister to insure its success. Although they did not fully enter upon this justification, yet they brought forward that which they appeared to consider as their principal ground of defence. The question being at length called for, the first resolution was rejected by the majority of 164 to 44. Mr. Fox, enraged and indignant at the event of this division, not only declared that he would not propose another motion; but, taking the resolution of censure out of his pocket, tore it into pieces, and immediately quitted the house.

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The duke
of Rich-
mond pro-
poses an ad-
dress to the
throne.

The duke of Richmond early in this session moved and procured a grand committee, to inquire into the state of the nation; and having been very active in forwarding its investigations, on the 7th of April he took a general view of the progress and result. It had not produced, in every case, he said, the desired information, but the effects on the whole had been important and beneficial; they had ascertained the state of the army and navy, and the vast expenditure which accrued from the American war. Ministers, it was true, had used their utmost efforts to prevent parliament from being informed; but, in opposing the resolutions as unseasonable, they had fully admitted the facts on the allegation of which they were grounded. They were far from pretending that the asserted deficiencies of the army and navy were unfounded; they objected not to the truth of the statement, but to the policy of the publication. Viewing the state of the resources made known through the exertions of the committee, he proposed to finish the inquiry by an address to the throne, which should exhibit an abstract of the information obtained, the resolutions proposed, and the general inferences which sprung from the whole.

Founded upon these bases, the projected address represented to his majesty THE STATE OF HIS DOMINIONS; and expressed the indignation of the house against the conduct of ministers, by which it was caused. In this calamitous, though he trusted not desperate, situation of public affairs, they reposed their ultimate hope in his majesty's paternal goodness. It reminded the king of the constitutional principles, whence issued the revolution, and
the

the accession of his illustrious house ; and the great and increasing prosperity of the country while its government adhered to these principles. It recalled to his majesty's recollection THE PROSPEROUS AND GLORIOUS STATE IN WHICH HE FOUND THESE REALMS ; contrasted the condition of that time with the *present distress*, and declared a confidence that the wisdom and goodness of the sovereign would put an end to that system under which so fatal a reverse had taken place. This was the substance of the duke of Richmond's address, interspersed through which was poignant asperity against his majesty's court and administration. While proposing remedies for the alleged evils, he insisted that the only sure means of extrication from a war with the colonies, was the recognition of their unqualified independence. This was a proposition, to which not only lord North, but the most firmly and violently and ardent supporter of coercive measures was not more inimical than the illustrious champion of conciliation, the earl of Chatham. His lordship had that session frequently attended the house of peers, less from the relaxation of distemper than from the calls of duty, which the increasing calamities of his country made him consider as every day more imperious. In a bodily state fitted only for the stillness and quiet of a bed of sickness, he encountered the active warfare of the senate, hoping his counsels might at length be admitted by those who were experiencing such evils from former rejection and intractability, and that, in his old age, he might contribute to restore part of the prosperity, greatness, and glory,

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Schism of
opposition
on the ques-
tion of
American
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ence.

which he had acquired for his country in the vigour of his life, and which left her when he ceased to guide her affairs. His exertion, in the former part of the session, so much beyond his bodily strength, had increased his distemper; but, informed of the business that was to be agitated, and aware of the doctrines which would be brought forward, he thought it incumbent on himself to render it manifest to the world, that though he agreed with the marquis of Rockingham and his adherents in reprobating the system of ministry, he totally differed from them on the question of American independence. He accordingly betook himself to the senate, of which, for near half a century, he had been the brightest luminary. Having arrived in the house, he refreshed himself in the lord chancellor's room, until he learned that business was about to begin. The infirm statesman was led into the house of peers, attended by his son-in-law, lord Mahon, and resting on the arm of his second son, Mr. William Pitt. He was richly dressed in a superb suit of black velvet, with a full wig, and covered up to the knees in flannel. He was pale and emaciated, but the darting quickness, force, and animation of his eyes, and the expression of his whole countenance, shewed that his mind *retained* its primæval perspicacity, brilliancy, and strength. The lords stood up, and made a lane for him to pass through to the bench of the earls, and with the gracefulness of deportment for which he was so eminently distinguished, he bowed to them as he proceeded. Having taken his seat, he listened with the most profound attention to the speech of the duke of Richmond. When his grace had finished,

Last efforts
of lord
Chatham.

finished, lord Chatham rose ; he lamented that, at so important a crisis, his bodily infirmities had interfered so often with his regular attendance on his duty in parliament. “ I have this day (said he) “ made an effort beyond the powers of my constitution, to come down to the house, perhaps the “ last time I shall enter its walls, to express my indignation against the proposition of yielding the “ sovereignty of America. My lord, I rejoice that “ the grave has not closed upon me, that I am still “ alive to lift up my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and noble monarchy. Pressed “ down as I am by the load of infirmity, I am “ little able to assist my country in this most perilous “ conjuncture ; but, my lords, while I have sense “ and memory, I never will consent to tarnish “ the lustre of this nation by an ignominious surrender of its rights and fairest possessions. Shall “ a people so lately the terror of the world, now “ fall prostrate before the house of Bourbon ? It is “ impossible. I am not, I confess, well informed “ of the resources of this kingdom ; but I trust it “ has still sufficient to maintain its just rights, “ though I know them not ; and any state, my lords, “ is better than despair. Let us at least make one “ effort ; and, if we must fall, let us fall like “ men.”

The duke of Richmond declared his grief and horror at the dismemberment of the empire to be as great as that of any man in the house or nation, but how was it to be avoided : he himself was totally ignorant of the means of resisting with success the combination of America with France and Spain.

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His illness,

death,

and cha-
racter.

Spain. He did not know how to preserve the dependence of America. If any person could prevent such an evil, Lord Chatham was the man; but what were the means that great statesman would propose. Lord Chatham, agitated by this appeal, made an eager effort at its conclusion to rise; but before he could utter a word, pressing his hand to his heart, he fell down in a convulsive fit. The duke of Cumberland and lord Temple, who were nearest him, caught him in their arms. The house was immediately in commotion, strangers were ordered to depart, and the house was adjourned. Lord Chatham being carried into an adjoining apartment, medical assistance soon arrived. Recovering in some degree, he was conveyed in a litter to his villa at Hayes in Kent, and there he lingered till the 11th of May, when he breathed his last, in the seventieth year of his age.

Thus died William Pitt, earl of Chatham; his death being hastened by his efforts to save his country, whose interest and glory it had been the business of his life to promote. Many as are the examples of uncommon ability which English history presents, she has none to record more brilliant, more forcible, or more beneficial to the times in which it operated. Surpassing other senators in glowing, energetic, and commanding eloquence, he still farther exceeded them in political wisdom; astonishing parliament as an orator, he astonished the nation and all mankind as a statesman. Rarely have been united in the same person, such powers of thought, speech, and action. Grasping the principles, circumstances, and relations to be considered

considered and discussed, he instantaneously perceived the arguments to be adduced in deliberation, or the means to be employed in conduct. Sagacious to discover, rapid and powerful to invent and combine, luminous and strong to explain and impress, he was decisive and prompt in execution. He not only discerned and chose effectual means, but applied them at the instant of time which was most favourable to their efficacy. Thoroughly master of the human character, he perfectly comprehended the general and peculiar talents and qualities of all, with whom either accident, inclination, or duty induced him to converse. Hence he selected the fittest instruments for executing, in the manifold departments of public service, his wise, bold, and sublime plans. Not his intellectual powers only, but the estimation resulting from these, in union with his moral conduct, gave to Mr. Pitt an authority far transcending that of other ministers: inaccessible to avarice, unseduced by pleasure and luxury, the abstinence of his dispositions, and the temperance of his habits, confirmed that confidence which his wisdom and magnanimity created: destined for the army, he did not receive an academic education. The ground-work of erudition was indeed laid in classical knowledge*; but the superstructure was left to himself. His studies were ethics, poetry, eloquence, history, and politics; especially the history and politics of his country. Thus he was, in a great measure, self-taught. His genius, though extraordinary in force and fertility, and enriched with ample mate-

* At Eaton, where he was the cotemporary and friend of Lyttelton and Fielding.

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rials, not being disciplined in proportion to its capacity and knowledge, did not habitually exert itself in close deduction* ; but, for grandeur of conception and comprehensiveness of views, force of reasoning, depth of conclusion, and sagacity of prediction ; strength and sublimity of imagery, and appositiveness of allusion ; for pathetic in every kind and variety ; for wielding at will the judgment, fancies, and passions of his hearers, William Pitt stood unrivalled. But his wisdom, magnanimity, and energy, are most clearly beheld in their effects. At the beginning of the seven years war, the nation, perceiving their country neglected by ministers, her arms discomfited and inglorious, and her spirits drooping and desponding, called on Mr. Pitt for relief. Unsupported by court-interest, obnoxious to the confederacy which had long prevailed, his genius overpowered intrigue. He came to the highest office, when none else by holding it could save the state. Having risen exclusively by ability himself, his chief object was to bring every kind of

* Reasoning does not merely depend upon power, but on power confirmed and facilitated by habit. Every able man is not necessarily a habitual logician ; nor is every age and country which exhibits works of great ability, necessarily eminent for ratiocinative efforts. In the reign of George the second, close argument was not the principal characteristic of our senatorial oratory ; brilliant and powerful images to charm the fancy, pathetic descriptions and exhibitions to impress the feelings, aided by graceful elocution and delivery to strike the senses, were much more prominent in the most approved models, than an unbroken chain of antecedents and consequences merely conducting truth to the understanding. Thus the state of the senate encouraged that mode of eloquence which the early studies and pursuits of Mr. Pitt tended to bestow.

ability

ability into action which could be beneficial to the country. Disdaining to govern by parties, he absorbed them all into his own vortex. From torpidity, weak-defeat, disgrace, and dejection, he changed the condition of the nation to ardour, strength, victory, glory, and triumph. Nor did Britain by her affection, gratitude, and admiration, or Europe by her astonishment, bear stronger testimonies of his exalted merit, than France by her hatred and terror for the name of Pitt. As Britain flourished while this statesman conducted her councils, from the time his direction ceased her decline commenced; but, as he had caused her elevation by his own wisdom and vigour, he endeavoured to prevent her downfall through the rashness, folly, and weakness of others. From the rise of this innovating system of colonial policy, he perceived its tendency; and foresaw and foretold its effects. He tried to avert the evil, but his attempts were vain: a feeble body, a constitution debilitated by intense application, and labouring under grievous malady, obstructed his regular attendance in parliament, to deprecate pernicious measures; but, when he did appear, his speeches deserved record as the emphatic dictates of prophesying wisdom. Nature arrayed transcendancy of genius, and grandeur of soul, in pleasing and striking colours, and bestowed on this favourite son an animated and expressive countenance, a tall and graceful figure, with a dignified mien and deportment.

This statesman possessed ambition in common with other great minds that are engaged in active life. If, however, he loved power, it was neither
to

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to enrich himself nor his friends, but to aggrandize his country, and humble her enemies. A more appropriate feature in his character, was contempt for tame mediocrity. He perhaps too much disdained that dexterity and address, which, though easily attained, and no indication of superior talents, often smoothes the road for the execution of wise and beneficial plans: such a man must have seen the inferiority of his colleagues; but it was not necessary to his political purposes to make them feel that inferiority. His unbending resolution is an object of regret to patriots, as it produced his resignation, when his services were so essential to his country. In the various relations of private life, lord Chatham was amiable and estimable. He married a lady, whose talents and character rendered her worthy of such a husband; whose conversation solaced his mind in the hours of infirmity and pain, and whose views coincided, and efforts co-operated, with his own, in the tuition of their several children. Few and trivial were the blemishes, which merely shewed that this extraordinary man was not exempted from the imperfections of humanity; but the historian who desires to narrate the truth, must endeavour to hand down to posterity William Pitt, earl of Chatham, as one of the chief glories of England.

Tributes of
respect and
gratitude
paid to his
memory by
parliament.

When the intelligence of lord Chatham's death arrived, the house of commons being sitting, colonel Barre, in a concise but just eulogium, expressed the obligation of the country to the deceased statesman, and moved an address to his majesty, for directions that his remains should be interred at
the

the public expence: the motion received general approbation. A monument was also proposed, and unanimously resolved to be erected in Westminster abbey. The following day it was stated to the house, that the illustrious object of their veneration, highly as he had benefited the nation, had been by no means equally attentive to his own private fortune; and that, notwithstanding his opportunities, he had left his family destitute of all suitable provision. An address was proposed and voted to his majesty, by which an annuity of 4000l. per annum was settled for ever on those heirs of the late earl of Chatham to whom the earldom might descend, and 20,000l. were granted for the payment of his debts.

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Towards the close of this session, application was made to parliament in favour of Ireland, to relieve that country from sundry restraints respecting their manufactures and trade: these restrictions injured Ireland, it was alleged, without serving Britain. From the facts presented by lord Nugent, who introduced the business, and other collateral evidence, it appeared that the trade of Ireland had suffered severely during the war; that the exportation of Irish manufactures, was in a great measure suspended; that thence numbers of the people were deprived of their stated employments, and rendered destitute of the means of subsistence. The decay of the trade was still more severely felt, in consequence of very heavy additions which had been recently made to the civil establishment, by the increase of pensions and other burdensome appointments: the relief solicited was to take off some

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to parlia-
ment in
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some of the many incumbrances which oppressed both the export and import traffic of that kingdom. In order to favour the woollen manufactory of England, the Irish had been hindered from manufacturing their own wool: the consequence was, that Irish wool was smuggled over into France, to the great detriment of British manufacturers, as with such materials France would soon be able to rival England. Bills were introduced to revive the trade and manufactures of Ireland, without injuring this country. The relief proposed in the house of commons was, first, that the Irish might be permitted to export directly to the British plantations or settlements all merchandize which should be the produce of that kingdom or of Great Britain, wool and woollen manufactures only excepted; as also foreign certificate goods legally imported: 2dly, that a direct importation should be allowed to all commodities being the produce of the British plantations, tobacco only excepted: 3dly, that the direct exportation of glass manufactured in Ireland should be permitted to all places except Great Britain: 4thly, that the importation of cotton yarn the manufacture of Ireland should be allowed, duty free, in Great Britain: as also, 5thly, the importation of sail-cloth and cordage. Bills founded on these propositions encountered a strong opposition. The projected change alarmed the merchants of Bristol and Liverpool, and also the manufacturers of Lancashire and the county of Nottingham, who strenuously opposed the admission of Ireland to a participation of the rights of British subjects; and a general alarm was spread through most of the trading

trading and manufacturing parts of the kingdom. They considered the admittance of Ireland to any share of British trade, as not only destructive of their property, but being equally subversive of their rights. They were as little disposed to consent that the people of Ireland should cultivate their own manufactures, and dispose of their native commodities at the proper foreign markets, as they were to admit them to any limited degree of participation. After much discussion, in which the supporters of the bill had the advantage, it was agreed by both parties to defer the final adjustment until the next session of parliament. The opposers gave way to partial enlargements with regard to Irish trade, from which its supporters hoped that, by allowing them another session before its final determination, they might become well-disposed to promote some of the propositions.

Sir Philip Jennings Clerk introduced a bill for restraining contractors with government from a seat in parliament, unless the contract should be made at a public bidding. The arguments on both sides were obvious: by the proposers of the law it was alleged, that contracts were often granted, on the most advantageous terms, for purposes of corruption: by its impugners, that it would be very unjust to deprive an individual of his privileges as a British subject, because he had engaged to furnish at a stipulated price articles wanted for the public service. Members of parliament, who were debarred from this source of mercantile profit, if disposed to traffic in corruption, could easily accomplish their desire clandestinely through agents:

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The consideration is postponed.

Bill for excluding contractors from the house of commons.

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Repeal of
king Wil-
liam's act
respecting
Roman
catholics,

the bill was rejected by a majority of only two, the numbers being against it 115, for it 113.

On the 14th of May, near the close of the session, sir George Saville proposed a bill for the repeal of certain penalties and disabilities, that were established by an act of the tenth of William III. for preventing the farther growth of popery. The legal and political ability of Mr. Dunning was chiefly employed in explaining the evils now proposed to be removed. By the act in question, popish priests or jesuits, found to officiate in the service of the Romish church, incurred the penalties of felony if foreigners, and of high treason if natives: the successions of popish heirs educated abroad were forfeited, and their estates descended to the next protestant heir: a son, or other nearest protestant relation, might take possession of the estate of a father or other next kinsman of the popish persuasion, during the life of the real proprietor: papists were prevented from acquiring any legal property by *purchase*, a term which in law included every mode of acquiring property, but descent; and thus the various sources of acquisition were shut up from the Roman catholics. The mildness of government had softened the rigour of the law; but it was to be remembered, that popish priests constantly lay at the mercy of the basest of mankind, common informers. On the evidence of any of these wretches, the magisterial and judicial powers were necessitated to enforce all the shameful penalties of the act. Others of these punishments held out powerful temptations to horrible and flagitious crimes. They seemed fitted

fitted to poison the sources of domestic felicity, to dissolve civil, moral, and religious obligations and duties, and to loosen all the bonds of society. Besides the intolerant and oppressive principle of the act, it appeared from the history of its enactment*, that it was a measure of party intrigue more than of general policy. Even if there then existed reasons which justified severity, they were no longer in force. The Roman catholics had conducted themselves with unquestionable propriety during the present reign, and had that very session presented a petition, expressive of their loyalty and attachment to the king and government, and their resolution, at the risk of their lives and fortunes, to defend their king and country against the apprehended invasion of the French and all their enemies. The ministerial party was extremely well inclined to shew favour to such meritorious subjects; and, though aware of their general unpopularity, they did not themselves chuse to hazard a proposition which would most probably excite alarm among the protestants; they very gladly adopted therefore the measure when brought forward by opposition, and the bill passed both houses without a division.

The supplies for this year were sixty thousand seamen, with a considerable augmentation of land-forces. The ways and means were, a loan of six millions at three per cent., with an annuity of two pounds ten shillings for a certain number of years, or for life; the sum of 480,000*l.* was raised by a lottery, and two millions by exchequer bills. The new taxes were, an additional duty of eight guineas per

Supplies,

and taxes.

* See Burnet's History of his own Times.

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ton imposed on all French wines, and four guineas on all other wines, sixpence in the pound on houses valued from five to fifty pounds a year, and one shilling on all above fifty pounds. The house-tax bill was strongly opposed, as unjust, partial, and oppressive; from the high value of the houses in London, it was asserted that nine-tenths of the burden would be borne by the metropolis. It was answered, that the value of houses arose chiefly from their situation, which rendered them pleasant, convenient, or profitable to their occupiers, and that the advantages much more than compensated the expence even with this addition; that, in other commercial places, rents rose in proportion to their lucrative situation, and that other parts of the kingdom would contribute a much greater share of the tax than had been asserted: the houses in every town or village as well as in London, would pay in proportion to the benefit arising from the situation. Beside the specific sums granted by parliament, an application was made for a vote of credit. This requisition occasioned a very warm debate: opposition contended, that the incapacity of administration was so glaring, and their conduct so very absurd and ruinous, that it would be extremely imprudent to trust to their discretion. Ministers defended their own measures, and insisted that a vote of credit was both usual and necessary in such circumstances, and that, though the assertions of opposition, if *proved*, would demonstrate them unfit for their offices, yet, until the allegations were established on better grounds than declamatory invective, the present counsellors, having the confidence

dence of parliament, remained in their offices ; and the public service therefore required, they should be furnished with the means of discharging their duties. The minority appeared not to have meant any objection to the vote of credit, since, notwithstanding the eloquence exerted on the subject, they suffered it to pass without a division.

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The charge of boundless expenditure was a frequent theme of animadversion during the session, and a committee was proposed for inspecting the public accounts ; but the motion was controverted by the supporters of administration, who declared, that the prudence and œconomy of ministers were so very great and satisfactory, that all examination of accounts would be superfluous. If undue profits in some particular instances had been obtained by contractors, the treasury would oblige them to refund such sums, as soon as the necessary inquiry should be made. The inspection might be productive of great mischief, by disseminating ill-founded jealousies and suspicions among the people. Although this reasoning, that it was unnecessary to investigate the management of pecuniary stewards, because they themselves and their connections asserted that they were prudent and œconomical, may not convince an impartial reader, yet it convinced the majority in the house of commons, and the desired inquiry was prevented.

A motion
for an in-
quiry re-
specting ex-
penditure,

is rejected.

On the 3d of June, parliament was prorogued. His majesty in his speech on this occasion, after returning thanks to parliament for their wise deliberations and vigorous efforts, expressed himself respecting the interference of France, with a dignity and mag-

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Dignified
answer of
his majesty.

nanimity worthy of the first personage in the first nation of the universe. He spoke the merited resentment of conscious justice, supported by conscious power. “My desire (said our king) to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, has been uniform and sincere; I reflect with great satisfaction, that I have made the faith of treaties, and the law of nations, the rule of my conduct; and that it has been my constant care to give no just cause of offence to any foreign power: let that power, by whom this tranquillity shall be disturbed, answer to their subjects, and to the world, for all the fatal consequences of war: the vigour and firmness of my parliament have enabled me to be prepared for such events and emergencies as may happen; and I trust that the experienced valour and discipline of my fleets and armies, and the loyal and united ardour of the nation, armed and animated in the defence of every thing that is dear to them, will be able, under the protection of Divine Providence, to defeat all the enterprises which the enemies of my crown may presume to undertake, and convince them how dangerous it is to provoke the spirit and strength of Great Britain.”

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*Campaign opens in America.—Operations by detachments from general Howe's army.—Howe resigns the command—festival in honour of him, under the name of Mischianza—departs for Europe—and is succeeded by sir Henry Clinton.—Arrival of commissioners from Britain.—The Americans refuse to treat, unless as an independent nation.—Evacuation of Philadelphia—and march through the Jerseys.—Battle of Red Bank—Court-house—the British army is successful—and arrives at New York.—D'Estaing arrives with a French fleet—maritime operations.—Attempts upon Rhode Island.—Partial and detached expeditions.—D'Estaing departs for the West Indies.—Farther proceedings of the commissioners—issue a proclamation without effect—return to England.—Congress publish a counter-manifesto.—Hostilities in Europe.—Admiral Keppel takes the command of the channel fleet.—Capture of the *Licorne* French frigate—of the *Pallas*.—Keppel returns to Portsmouth for a reinforcement—sails in pursuit of the enemy—descries the French fleet off Ushant.—Battle of the 27th of July indecisive.—The French fleet retires during the night.—Apprehensive of a lee-shore, Keppel forbears pursuit.—Captures by frigates and privateers.—Balance greatly favourable to England.—Depredations by Paul Jones—plunders the seat of lord Selkirk.—Crimination and recrimination by Keppel and Palliser—are respectively tried and acquitted.*

FROM political proceedings we now return to military transactions. The hostile armies at Philadelphia and Valley Forge passed the severity of the winter within a few miles of each other, in great tranquillity. Spring arrived, and the commander in chief continued to repose himself at Philadelphia;

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Campaign—
opens in
America.

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Operations
by detach-
ments from
general
Howe's
army.

he, however, sent out several occasional detachments, which displayed British intrepidity and skill in desultory operations, without any material result. In the beginning of March, colonel Mawhood was sent with the 27th and 46th regiments, and the New Jersey volunteers, to make a descent on the coast of Jersey, to procure forage, and assist the loyalists, who were severely oppressed by Livingston, the American governor. Various creeks communicate with the Delaware on the Jersey side; over the Allewas, one of these, there were three bridges; Thompson's farthest up, St. Quinton's in the middle, and Hancock's next the river. At the two last the provincials determined to make a stand. Mawhood having pretended to retreat, enticed the Americans to cross St. Quinton's bridge, and fall into an ambuscade which he had previously formed; the enemy being surrounded, most of them were either killed, taken prisoners, or drowned. Major Simcoe, being employed to attack the party posted at Hancock's bridge, crossed the creek in boats by night with a party of soldiers; assailed, surprised, and dispersed the Americans; and secured a passage for the whole British detachment: colonel Mawhood having completed his forage, returned to Philadelphia. In the beginning of May, an American brigade, commanded by general Lacy of the Pennsylvania militia, being posted at the Crooked-billet, on one of the chief roads between the country and Philadelphia, obstructed the approaches of farmers with provisions for the city. That enterprising and intelligent officer, major Simcoe, having perceived this position and discovered its object, proposed to march

march round with the queen's rangers, so as to gain the rear of the enemy, while another party should lie in ambuscade to intercept their retreat to Washington's army. The scheme being approved, colonel Abercrombie was appointed to command the ambuscade, and to lie in wait till he should hear the firing of Simcoe's corps. On the 30th of May, major Simcoe set off with his detachment by the projected route, and afterwards Abercrombie departed with about four hundred light infantry, a large party of light dragoons, and horses, for the sake of greater expedition, to mount his foot soldiers. The colonel could not reach the place of his destination at the appointed time during the night; eager, however, to support major Simcoe, he sent forward his cavalry and light infantry. The commander of the advanced corps having proceeded as far as Lacy's out-post, was seen and fired at by the enemy's sentinel, but did not retire. The American commander concluding a stronger force to be at hand, immediately filed up the country, and, by abandoning his baggage, escaped the pursuit. The British troops having dislodged the provincials, returned with the captured baggage to Philadelphia; and, by the success of this excursion, greatly facilitated the conveyance of provisions to the British army. An expedition being sent under majors Maitland and Simcoe, destroyed a great number of American vessels, that had escaped the preceding campaign at the capture of the forts on the Delaware. These desultory enterprises proved that British courage and conduct by land and water were equal to the efforts of former times, however
little

C H A P. little they conduced to the promotion of British in-
XXI. terest.

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Howe re-
signs the
command.

For several months, sir William Howe had resolved to resign his command, and intimated his intention to lord George Germaine. His alleged ground for desiring to be recalled was, that he had not received the necessary confidence and support from administration. Ministers expressed the utmost surprise at his complaint, the grounds of which they affirmed were fully confuted by the written authority with which he was entrusted, and the force with which he was furnished. The requested permission, however, was granted, and the general accordingly prepared to depart for Europe.

Festival in
honour
of him,
under the
name of
Mischienza.

The easy and agreeable manners and indulgent conduct of general Howe, had gained the affection of many of his officers. Those viewing his exploits and services through the partial medium of attachment, attributed to them a merit and efficacy greater than that which has been allowed them by the rigorous scrutiny of impartial judgment. As a testimony of the high estimation in which they held their general, some of his officers gave in honour of him, when about to resign his command, a festival, which they denominated a Mischienza. The exhibition, indeed, was of a miscellaneous nature, and partook partly of the nature of Roman spectacles on the return of victorious generals to their grateful country: the general marched through the army between two triumphal arches. His train of attendants, however, seven filken knights of the blended rose, seven filken knights of the burning mountain, and fourteen damsels representing the

the paragons of knight-errantry, called before the imagination the *fabulous* glory of chivalrous ages. A tilt and tournament, *or mock representation of warlike atchievements*, made a part of the entertainment. On the top of each triumphal arch was placed a figure of Fame, ornamented with stars, blowing from her trumpet, in letters of light, *Tes lauriers sont immortels* *. While the multitude were dazzled by the splendor of this magnificent spectacle, some of the by-standers, whose fancies had not been sublimed into the regions of romance, but suffered their memories fully to recollect, and their judgments to appretiate, actual performance, wondered where, when, and how these *immortal laurels* had been earned. Soon after this signal testimony of esteem and admiration had been adduced in favour of his exploits as commander in chief, sir William Howe returned to Europe, and the office which he left was conferred on sir Henry Clinton.

Howe de-
parts for
Europe, and
is succeeded
by sir Henry
Clinton.

The British commissioners now arrived with conciliatory propositions. To the success of their mission, many obstacles were foreseen; but some had lately occurred which had not been expected. Before the completion of the treaty between France and the Americans, the court of Versailles stated a difficulty, without the removal of which they said they could not accede to an alliance. Were Britain and America to be reconciled, on terms by which the latter should renounce her independence, the engagements which she might have contracted would be no longer valid. To destroy this ground

Arrival of
the com-
missioners
from Bri-
tain.

* Annual Register, 1778.

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of objection, the congress, in November 1777, entered into a resolution, declaring, that they would reject all proposals for a treaty with the king of Great Britain, which should be inconsistent with the independence of the United States, or with such alliances as might be formed under their authority. In the following April, having seen copies of the conciliatory bills, they, on the 22d of that month, passed resolutions, expressing reprobation of the conduct of the British parliament, as persevering in the same coercive plans, but by indirect and insidious means; and declaring their contempt of the artifices and dissimulation by which England endeavoured to put them in execution. The general spirit of their proceedings was continuance in hostility to Britain, and amity to France; and the tendency of their acts was to promote the same sentiments among the people. On the 2d of May, Silas Dean arrived at York Town with copies of the treaties concluded between France and America at Paris. The congress immediately published a gazette, which, besides a summary of the whole, exhibited the most flattering articles, accompanied by comments, in which they extolled to the people the extraordinary equity, generosity, and unparalleled honour of the French king. They appeared to consider Spain as already a party in the confederacy; the other great powers of Europe as favourable to America, and desiring the humiliation of England. In such a state of American enmity to Great Britain, and exulting hopes of success, the commissioners arrived with their pacificatory proposals. On the 9th of June, they applied for a passport to their secretary, doctor Fergusson,

Fergusson, who, they intended, should convey their propositions to the congress, and conduct the negotiation with that body. General Washington refused a passport, until he should consult the congress; whereupon the commissioners forwarded their papers by the ordinary military posts, and they reached the congress on the 11th of June. On the 17th, a brief, but decisive answer was returned by its president, manifesting a determination to maintain their independence, to adhere to the engagements with France, which as an independent nation they had contracted, and to reject the present proposition, which did not admit that independence. Reprobating the war as unjust in principle and barbarous in conduct, they notwithstanding declared their willingness to enter, as an independent state, into any negotiation consistent with their present treaties *. In a paper of the same date, the congress issued its approbation of general Washington's refusal of a passport to the British-secretary.

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The Americans refuse to treat, unless as an independent nation.

This answer plainly shewed, that all attempts to conciliate America on the principles and plan proposed by parliament would be ineffectual, and proved that Britain either should have persisted in coercion, or offered terms more suitable to the present state of sentiments and affairs. The offer, indeed, by flattering the pride, encouraged the perseverance of the American republicans; it confirmed the authority of the congress, and proved to Britain,

* See Mr. President Henry Laurence's answer to the British commissioners, dated June 17th, 1778, in the collection of State Papers for that year.

that

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that the only alternative was entire conquest, or the acknowledgment (really at least, if not verbally) that they were no longer subject to our power; it held out to the loyalists the discomfiture of their party, the proscription of their property, and exile from their native country; and dispirited the officers and foldiers themselves, by deeply impressing them with an idea, that the service in which they were employed was considered as hopeless.

Evacuation
of Philadel-
phia.

A plan of operations had been formed for the campaign, should the proposed treaty fail. The first movement enjoined by the British ministers through lord Carlisle to the commander in chief, was the evacuation of Philadelphia. The abandonment of the chief city in America, and the principal object of so powerful an army during the whole campaign, was by no means calculated to dishearten our enemies, or the Americans, or to encourage the loyalists; nevertheless there existed circumstances which rendered such a measure expedient. We were no longer at war against the revolted colonies alone, but were contending with the chief maritime power of the world after our own. France had sent out from Toulon a great naval armament, of which the destination might either be America or the West Indies; if the former, the fleet under lord Howe, very inferior in force, might be blocked up within the long and winding river of Delaware, that abounded in shoals and other impediments to navigation: besides, the army ought to occupy a station from which reinforcements might be most easily and expeditiously sent wherever they were required. For this purpose

Philadelphia, so distant from the sea, was totally unfit; by returning to New York, they could dispatch troops to any other situation that might most advantageously employ their exertions: for these reasons, government determined to direct the evacuation of Philadelphia.

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On the 18th of June, the army passed the Delaware, and the same day encamped on the Jersey shore. The country through which they had to march, was strong, and intersected by defiles; lest these being occupied should obstruct his progress, sir Henry Clinton thought it necessary to carry along with him a large supply of provisions, which, together with the baggage, greatly retarded the progress of the army. The excessive heat of the weather, the closeness of the roads through the woods, the constant labour of constructing or repairing bridges in a country abounding in creeks, brooks, and marshes, were all severely felt by the British forces. Washington, having discovered the design of Clinton, detached general Maxwell to obstruct a retreat, until he himself should cross the American army. For several days the provincials were not able materially to interrupt the British army; our light troops expelled them from the defiles, and the only obstructions arose from the bridges being destroyed. The army now came to a place where the road was divided into two branches: that to the left was the shortest, but the river Rariton intervened; the passage of which, in the face of an enemy superior in number, might be both difficult and dangerous; more especially as intelligence was received, that Gates was advancing from the north,

The army
marches
through the
Jerseys.

to

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Battle of
Freehold
Court-
house.

to form a junction with Washington near that river. Sir Henry Clinton accordingly took the most circuitous route, nearer to the coast. Having proceeded some miles, he encamped on the 27th on a high ground in the neighbourhood of Freehold Courthouse. Washington had before kept to the left, and being now reinforced, posted himself within a few miles of the British rear. Clinton having sent forward the baggage under Knyphausen with the first division of the army, he himself with the last waited the approach of the enemy, and on the 28th of June was informed that large bodies of the provincials were marching on both his flanks, while a considerable division followed himself. Suspecting that the object of the Americans on his flanks was to overtake Knyphausen, who was now retarded by defiles, he determined to attack the provincials who hovered on his rear, that they might recall their detachments from annoying Knyphausen. Though he was by this time, in prosecution of his march, descended into a plain, and the enemy had occupied the eminence which he had just left, he attacked them, compelled them to fly, and would have destroyed the whole front division, had not Washington, by occupying a defile with his main body, repressed the pursuit. The light troops who had been sent forward to attack Knyphausen, were repulsed by that general, and recalled, to join and support the main army. The loss of the British that day, in killed, wounded, and missing, amounted to three hundred and fifty-eight; that of the Americans, to three hundred and sixty-one. Little as was the difference in point of numbers, it appears, from

from his subsequent conduct, that general Washington thought himself worsted, as he did not afterwards attempt to disturb the British retreat, but marched away to the left towards the north river. The circumstances of the engagement produced a quarrel between Lee and Washington. According to Washington, Lee, who commanded the advanced corps, had disobeyed orders, in not attacking the enemy when they were on the plain, and he on the declivity; and farther charged him with want either of conduct or courage, in retreating before the British, though he was so advantageously posted. Lee wrote a very angry letter; Washington answered; Lee replied still more violently: a court martial was demanded and ordered; the charges were, disrespect to the general, and misbehaviour in an unnecessary and shameful retreat. He was suspended from his command for twelve months. Meanwhile the British army arrived in safety at Sandyhook, where they found lord Howe landed the preceding day: on the 5th of July the army embarking, came to New York the same night.

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The British
army is
successful,

and arrives
at New
York.

D'Estaing
arrives with
a French
fleet.

The count D'Estaing sailed from Toulon the 13th of April, with twelve ships of the line and six frigates, carrying a considerable number of troops on board; but, from adverse winds, did not pass the straits of Gibraltar till the 15th of May. The British ministry, who were not unapprised of this equipment, got ready a fleet of an equal number of ships, the command of which was given to vice-admiral Byron. The armament left Portsmouth on the 20th of May, and proceeding to Plymouth, finally sailed from thence on the 9th of June, after

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such advices had been received as no longer left it doubtful that the Toulon squadron was bound to North America. D'Estaing arrived on the coast of Virginia on the 5th of July, but hearing of the evacuation of Philadelphia, sailed to the northward; and on the 11th of July, in the evening, came to an anchor off New York, with an apparent design of attempting to enter the harbour. The naval force under lord Howe consisted only of six ships of the line, and four of fifty guns, with a proportional number of frigates and smaller vessels. Intelligence of the count D'Estaing's approach having been received some days before he came in sight, a masterly disposition of their force for the defence of the harbour was made, under the immediate direction of the admiral, whose exertions were nobly seconded by the universal ardour which prevailed, not only in the navy, army, and transport service, but among all ranks and classes of people at New York. Some time after D'Estaing's arrival, the wind was unfavourable to the execution of his supposed intention; but on the 22d of July it changed to the eastward, and the French fleet was seen weighing anchor. The long meditated attack, it was now supposed, would instantly commence; and so confident were all it would prove abortive, that the critical moment which was to decide, not only the fate of the British fleet but of the army, was expected with impatience. But D'Estaing, to their great disappointment, as soon as his ships had weighed anchor, instead of attempting to enter the harbour, made sail to the southward. He afterwards changed his course, and steered directly to Rhode

Rhode Island, before which he arrived on the 29th of July. Lord Howe being informed of the enemy's station, determined to attempt the preservation of the island; but, as he was inferior in number, not to venture an engagement, without some considerable advantage, which might counterbalance their superiority. For several months the expulsion of the British troops from Rhode Island, had been in contemplation of the provincials. In spring, general Sullivan was sent to take the command in its neighbourhood, and made preparation for invading this province. To these dispositions major-general Pigot, who commanded at Rhode Island, was not inattentive; he readily perceived their object, and, in order to retard them, sent two detachments under lieutenant-colonel Campbell and major Eyre, who destroyed or took the vessels, naval stores, and ordnance, which were prepared for the invasion, and burnt their ship-timber and dock-yards. From these losses, the provincials were not in readiness for co-operation, when D'Estaing arrived off Rhode Island. Lord Howe, after being detained four days by contrary winds, put to sea on the 6th of August with the British fleet, which was now increased to eight ships of the line, five of fifty guns, two of forty-four guns, and four frigates, with three fire-ships, two bombs, and a number of smaller vessels. Justly deeming the weather-gage too great an advantage to be added to the superior force of the enemy, the British admiral skilfully and ably contended for that important object, while D'Estaing was no less anxious to preserve it in his own favour. The contest of seamanship prevented an engagement on that day; but

Maritime
operations.

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the wind on the following day still continuing adverse to the design of the British admiral, he determined to make the best of the present circumstances, and to engage the enemy; forming the line in such a manner, as to be joined by three fire-ships which were under the tow of as many frigates. When the fleets were about to engage, a strong gale of wind increased to a tremendous storm, and continuing for near two days, by separating the fleets, not only prevented immediate battle, but so dispersed and damaged the vessels of both parties, as to render an engagement for some time impracticable. The accidental meeting of single ships after the tempest, produced conflicts which afforded new specimens of British valour and nautical skill. Captain Dawson of the *Renown* of fifty guns, on the evening of the 13th, fell in with the French admiral's ship, the *Languedoc* of eighty-four, and notwithstanding the great difference of metal, attacked her with evident advantage, until darkness put an end to the contest. The next morning the gallant Dawson was preparing to renew the conflict, when the appearance of six more of the enemy's ships compelled him to retire. The same evening, captain Hotham, with the *Preston* of 50 guns, attacked the *Tonant*, a French ship of 80 guns, with similar vigour and success; being also the next morning obliged to desist, by the arrival of several other ships. On the 16th of August, captain Raynor of the *Isis*, also of 50 guns, attacked the *Cæsar* of 74, and after an engagement for an hour and a half, forced her to retreat; but being herself damaged in her rigging, was incapable of pursuit. The loss
of

of the English ship consisted of one killed and fifteen wounded; of the enemy, fifty killed and wounded. The French ship was, besides, so much injured in her hull, that she was compelled to go into Boston to refit. No portion of the history of war can the patriotic author write, or the patriotic reader peruse, with more exulting pleasure, than accounts of actions which manifest British bravery and conduct with inferior force triumphant on our peculiar element. The disabled ships of Britain went to New York to refit, while the French admiral, with the same intent, betook himself to Boston. When lord Howe's squadron was repaired, being now increased by the arrival of the Monmouth, one of admiral Byron's fleet, he, on the 30th of August, sailed to the bay of Boston, in pursuit of the enemy; but found their fleet so well secured by their position, under cover of land batteries, that he thought it prudent to retire. Returning to New York, he found more ships of Byron's squadron arrived, and the admiral himself daily expected. The naval force of England, on the admiral's station, being now undoubtedly superior to that of the enemy, lord Howe, having previously obtained leave to return to England on account of his health, resigned the command to admiral Gambier, and departed for Europe.

The Americans, trusting to the co-operation of the French fleet, had sent an army of ten thousand men, under general Sullivan, to Rhode Island, and commenced their operations. But the dispersion of the French fleet, and its final departure for Boston, daunted their spirits, induced many to desert, and

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Attempt on
Rhode
Island,

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Partial and
detached
expeditions.

left the remainder inferior to the British garrison. General Sullivan thereupon began his retreat, and departed in the night of the 28th of August, several hours before the British perceived they were gone. Sir Robert Pigot, the English commander, followed on the 29th, attacked the rear division, and gained an advantage; but not so decisive as to prevent the Americans from continuing their route. Sir Henry Clinton, who was hastening by sea to relieve Rhode Island, arrived one day too late to intercept the retreating Americans. Although the detention of Sir Henry Clinton probably saved Sullivan's corps from destruction, yet the miscarriage of the first enterprise, which they had undertaken in concert with France, not only disappointed, but offended the Americans; and though the officers and gentlemen endeavoured to dissemble every appearance of displeasure, the commonalty, less restrained by delicacy and policy, gave loose to their feelings. Indeed, scarcely two nations could be found in the civilized world, whose manners could be so reciprocally repulsive, as the sanctimonious austerity of the New Englanders, and the gay levity and dissipated libertinism of Frenchmen. Between the seamen of both countries, outrages and riots took place, that were like to have been attended with very serious consequences; the leading men of Boston, however, exerted themselves successfully to appease the tumults, and to give satisfaction to their new allies. General Clinton having returned towards New York, concerted several expeditions for destroying privateers. Major-general Grey being detached to Buzzard bay in New England, landed on the banks of the Acushmet river, and executed his enterprise with
such

such rapidity, that in less than one day he burned and destroyed all the ships in the river, amounting to more than seventy sail. The next day proceeding to Martha's vineyard, a fertile and rich island, he destroyed several vessels, and carrying off a valuable booty in provisions, returned to New York. Lord Cornwallis soon afterwards undertook the direction of an expedition to Little Egg harbour, on the coast of Jersey, which was also a general receptacle for privateers: one division of the detachment surprised and surrounded an American regiment of light horse, during the night, at Old Tapan on the North river; the greater number were killed, or taken prisoners. Captain Patrick Fergusson undertook to conduct the enterprise to Little Egg harbour; and by combined valour, activity, and skill, surprised an American legion under count Pulaski. The success of this enterprise depending on celerity of execution, a great carnage unavoidably took place. The Americans poured out virulent invectives against what they termed the cruelty of the British; but it does not appear that any act was committed inconsistent with the laws of war. This was the last action of any importance performed by the British during this campaign in North America. The weather was that year extremely tempestuous on the American ocean; admiral Byron's fleet had been dispersed and separated by a storm on its passage from Europe. After being refitted at New York, he again went to sea with a view to block up the French fleet in Boston bay; but a second tempest drove him from that station. The count D'Estaing,

F 4

taking

D'Estaing
departs for
the West
Indies.

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Further
proceedings
of the com-
missioners.

taking the opportunity of the British admiral's absence, failed to the West Indies.

While these operations were carrying on by land and sea, the commissioners continued in America, determined to leave nothing undone that might effect their purpose. Although, hopeless of success from the first answer of the congress, they thought it necessary to reply; desiring an explanation of the sense in which the term independence was to be understood, and copies of the treaties with foreign powers, which had been referred to by the congress. Respecting the second preliminary, they declared the proposed removal of the troops inadmissible, as a force must necessarily be kept for defence against the common enemy, and for the protection of the loyalists. To this second letter of the commissioners, no answer was given.

Governor Johnstone being individually acquainted with several gentlemen of character and influence, tried to obtain a personal interview, in hopes of convincing them that it was the interest of the colonies to renew their amity with the mother-country; for that purpose he requested admission to several gentlemen, but a decided negative was returned: he also wrote letters to different individuals, paragraphs of which were construed into an attempt to corrupt the integrity of the leaders. One of these is addressed to general Reed, and the following is the paragraph that underwent the interpretation. After an eloquent description of the evils flowing from the existing dissensions, and the blessings of reconciliation, the writer proceeds: "The man who can
be

be instrumental in bringing us all to act once more in harmony, and unite together the various powers which this contest has drawn forth, will deserve more from the king and people, from patriotism, humanity, friendship, and all the tender ties that are affected by the quarrel, than were ever yet bestowed on human kind." On the 16th of June, in a private letter to Robert Morris esq. formerly his friend, he says, "I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America, are incapable of being influenced by improper motives: but in all such transactions there is risk, and I think that whoever ventures should be secured; at the same time that honour and emolument shall naturally follow the fortune of those who have steered the vessel in the storm, and brought her safely to port. I think that Washington and the president have a right to every favour that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our interests, and spare the miseries and devastations of war."

The congress published the letters above mentioned by governor Johnstone, and attempted to construe them into an endeavour to bribe. The letters themselves express no such intention*; they merely hold out a prospect of honour and reward for meritorious conduct. The congress, that they might inflame the passions of the people, issued a declaration, that it was incompatible with the

* Mr. Belsham alleges, that Mr. Johnstone employed a Mrs. Fergusson, as the agent in his proposed corruption. As he adduces no proofs to support his assertion, although he says *the fact was clearly ascertained*, an impartial historian cannot admit the charge on so very vague an evidence.

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honour of congress to hold any farther communication with governor Johnstone. The British commissioners, finding it was in vain to hope for the accomplishment of this great object, now confined their application to subordinate purposes. One of these was concerning the captured army of general Burgoyne. By one of the articles of capitulation it was stipulated, that the surrendering army should be at liberty to transport itself to Great Britain, on condition of not serving again in America during the war. Boston, the place from which it was to embark, was difficult of access to transports at that season of the year, which was the middle of winter; general Burgoyne applied for leave to march the troops to Rhode Island, that they might there embark. This request the congress not only refused, which was merely the denial of a solicited favour, but they declared a resolution of violating a solemn compact; they resolved to prohibit the embarkation of the Saragota troops from any port whatsoever, until a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention of Saratoga should be properly notified by the court of Great Britain to congress; and entered upon their journals a resolution to that effect. This resolution was evidently a breach of the convention, as the now desired ratification was no part of that treaty. The commissioners, in a letter dated the 7th of August, remonstrated against the detention of the troops, contrary to the faith of treaties. Without answering this remonstrance, they entered into a charge against governor Johnstone, with whom they declared they could hold no communication. Governor Johnstone, to remove
the

the pretended bar to intercourse, withdrew himself from the commission; and, in the public act by which he testified this determination, he very severely reprehended the conduct of the congress, and exposed the shallow pretext by which they endeavoured to cover their own breach of faith. These assertions respecting him, indeed, were never proved; and if they had been established, their authentication could not have justified the conduct of the Americans: even if Mr. Johnstone had attempted to bribe, the endeavour would not have justified a *breach of contract* with others not concerned in that endeavour. Governor Johnstone set off for Europe, leaving an able vindication of his conduct, in a letter addressed to his friend doctor Adam Fergusson. Meanwhile the remaining commissioners attempted by new arguments to shew the congress the real views of France, and how little advantage they could reasonably expect from this connection; they also sent again their former remonstrance, without the signature of governor Johnstone; and offered to ratify, in the king's name, all the conditions of the Saratoga convention, though such ratification was no part of its terms; but the congress persevered in the breach of faith. The troops which had surrendered at Saratoga, having trusted to a convention stipulating their free return to Great Britain, were detained in captivity by the American congress violating a contract.

The commissioners sent no more letters to the congress; but published, on the 3d of October, a manifesto and proclamation, addressed to the members of the congress, and the members of the general assemblies

They issue
a proclama-
tion,

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semblies or conventions of the several colonies. In this paper, they recapitulated the steps which they had taken for executing the objects of their commission; they enumerated their repeated endeavours to restore tranquility and happiness to America; and stated the extent and beneficial tendency of the terms which they were empowered to offer: notwithstanding the obstructions they had encountered, they still declared their readiness to proceed in the execution of the powers contained in their commission, and to treat not only with deputies from all the colonies conjunctly, but with any provincial assembly or convention individually, at any time within the space of forty days from the date of their manifesto: next addressing themselves to all persons, ecclesiastical, military, civil, or private, and suggesting to the consideration of each of these classes, such motives as might be supposed to have the greatest influence, they adjured them not to let pass so favourable an opportunity of securing their liberties, future prosperity, and happiness, upon a permanent foundation: lastly, they appealed to the Americans collectively, in the following terms: “It will now become the colonies in general to call to mind their own solemn appeals to heaven in the beginning of this contest, that they took arms only for the redress of grievances; and that it was their wish, as well as their interest, to remain for ever connected with Great Britain. We again ask them, whether all their grievances, real or supposed, have not been amply and fully redressed? and we insist, that the offers we have made, leave nothing to be wished, in point of either immediate liberty or perma-

permanent security." The manifesto observed, that the policy as well as the benevolence of Great Britain checked the extremes of war, when they tended to distress a people who were still considered as our fellow-subjects, and to desolate a country which was shortly to become again a source of mutual advantage. But when that country professed the unnatural design, not only of estranging her interests from ours, but of mortgaging herself and her resources to our enemies, the whole contest was changed, and the question was, how far Great Britain may, by every means in her power, destroy or render useless a connection contrived for her ruin, and for the aggrandisement of her enemy? Under such circumstances, the laws of self-preservation must direct the conduct of Great Britain, to render the accession of the American colonies as little beneficial as possible to France. The commissioners having remained until the forty days were expired, and not finding the proclamation likely to produce any conciliatory effect, set sail for Europe. The congress soon after published a counter-manifesto, in which they affected to consider the proclamation of the commissioners as denouncing new schemes of vengeance and desolation, and declared their resolution to retaliate with the utmost severity.

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but without effect,

They return to England.
The congress publishes a counter-manifesto.

Hostilities in Europe were entirely maritime, and confined to the sea near the north-west coast of France. The French government, as soon as it had resolved on war, employed the most assiduous and vigorous preparations to equip a fleet sufficient to cope with England. In order to distract the attention of Great Britain, they pretended to threaten an invasion; and brought large bodies of troops to their northern

Hostilities in Europe.

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northern coast. The British government ordered the militia to be embodied, and considerable numbers of soldiers to march to the vicinity of the coast: they directed camps to be formed at Winchester, Salisbury, and St. Edmond's-bury, Warley common, and Coxheath; but they trusted the protection of the country chiefly to the fleet.

From the first appearance of probable hostilities between Great Britain and France so early as November 1776, lord Sandwich had cast his eyes on admiral Keppel as the most proper person to be entrusted with the important station. This gentleman had distinguished himself at the Havannah, being then second in command, and was highly esteemed and beloved in the navy. Having conversed with Mr. Keppel, lord Sandwich found that, if the circumstances of the country required his efforts, his services would not be wanting: the admiral was indeed politically connected with opposition; but when war with France was become unavoidable, he, in consequence of his disposition before signified, was offered an appointment, which he accepted. In the beginning of June, a fleet of twenty ships of the line was ready for service. With these under his command, the admiral set sail on the 13th of that month, to protect our commerce, defend our coasts, and watch the motions of the enemy. The powers reposed in the admiral, were discretionary and unlimited. Sir Robert Harland and sir Hugh Palliser, two gentlemen high in his estimation and in the opinion of the public, were respectively appointed second and third in command. At this time war had not been declared, nor were reprisals ordered. The fleet proceeded to the bay of Biscay. On the

Admiral
Keppel
takes the
command
of the chan-
nel fleet.

17th of June, two French frigates were seen reconnoitring the British fleet: one of them, the *Licorne* of 32 guns, being overtaken by some of our ships, for some hours sailed with them; but manifesting an intention of departure, a shot was fired over her, when, to the astonishment of our fleet, she poured a broadside into the *America*, one of our ships of the line, and immediately struck her colours. To render this procedure the more extraordinary, lord Longford, captain of the *America*, and the French commander, were from their respective ships engaged in amicable conversation. Longford, instead of sinking the French frigate for her wanton attack, with cool magnanimity sent her under the stern of the *Victory*. The other ship, the *Belle Poole*, a large frigate, was closely pursued by the *Arethusa* of 32 guns, but not overtaken till at a great distance from the fleet. Captain Marshal, the British commander, informed the French captain, that he had orders from the admiral to conduct him to the fleet; but the Frenchman peremptorily refused to comply. Marshal fired across the ship; the answer was a broadside: a desperate engagement ensued; the *Arethusa* suffered much in her rigging, the *Belle Poole* in her hull, and great numbers were killed. The Frenchman perceiving the other so much damaged as to be unable to pursue, embraced the opportunity of retiring to the coast. This advantage, gained over superior numbers and weight of metal in the first conflict, much delighted the British sailors, and was reckoned ominous of future success. The next morning, the *Pallas*, another French frigate of 32 guns, approaching to reconnoitre

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Keppel re-
turns to
Portsmouth
for a rein-
forcement :sails in pur-
suit of the
enemy.

noitre the fleet, was pursued and taken, and with the *Licorne* sent into Plymouth. The French exclaimed against the detention of the two frigates, and pretended to assert that Britain was the aggressor, although France had before begun hostilities, by abetting the Americans in their revolt from their mother-country. Although admiral Keppel seized two French frigates for improper conduct in the commanders, he abstained from their merchantmen, as letters of reprisal had not issued. This forbearance in our naval commander may perhaps have been right ; but, as the hostile conduct of France justified hostilities from England, the more effectually they had been begun, the greater would be the prospect of ultimate success. The capture of their trading vessels, as in the commencement of the former war, would have distressed the enemy, by depriving them both of sailors and riches. Admiral Keppel being informed that the French fleet lying in Brest water amounted to thirty-two ships of the line, repaired to St. Helen's for a reinforcement. The return of the admiral occasioned very great astonishment and consternation, not without a mixture of dissatisfaction ; but ministers lost no time in augmenting* his armament ; lord Sandwich instantly set off for Portsmouth, and in a fortnight, ten ships of the line were added to Keppel's fleet. In the middle of July he set sail at the head of thirty British ships of the line, one of them the *Victory*, of the first rate, six of 90 guns, and the rest of the third rate. The fleet was formed into

* See Gibbon's Letter to lord Sheffield, July 1778.

three divisions, the van commanded by sir Robert Harland, the rear by sir Hugh Palliser, and the centre by the admiral himself. Reprisals having been now issued, the French fleet had left Brest harbour on the 8th of July, commanded by count D'Orvilliers, and was cruising off the coast of Bretagne. On the 23d of July, in the afternoon, the fleets descried each other; the British ships being dispersed, a signal was thrown out for forming the line, but night came on before the ships were properly stationed. The following morning, the wind being westerly, it was discovered that the French had gained the weather-gage; D'Orvilliers, however, though superior in number, still avoided battle. The British admiral, chasing to windward the three following days, endeavoured to bring on a battle, but in vain. On the 27th, a sudden squawl came on, so very thick as to conceal the two fleets from the view of each other. When the weather became clear, it was found that the French fleet had fallen considerably to leeward, and was near the van of the British. Instantly admiral Keppel gave the signal for forming the line; an engagement began, as the fleets were passing each other in contrary directions. At this time, the Victory and the other ships of the centre division were nearest to the enemy. Sir Robert Harland being to windward, was ready for immediate service; while sir Hugh Palliser was considerably to leeward with the rear, and out of the line. The French, who were now to leeward, had made an alteration in their movements, which seemed to indicate an intention of cutting off the rear division. The admiral, professing to entertain this apprehension,

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Describes the
French fleet
off Ushant.

Battle of the
27th of
July,

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indecisive.

The French
fleet retires
during the
night.Apprehen-
sive of a lee
shore, Keppel
forbears
pursuit.

sion, left the station in which the battle began, and failed to leeward*, until he was opposite to the enemy's van; while sir Robert Harland, by his orders, covered the rear. Keppel kept a signal constantly flying for Palliser to join the line, but that commander did not arrive. The admiral repeated the signal to sir Hugh Palliser to come to his station; but, before the order was obeyed, darkness prevented the renewal of the contest. The French admiral ranged his fleet so as to appear determined to fight the next morning; but in the night they quitted their station, leaving three frigates with lights at proper intervals, to appear to the British the leading ships of their three divisions. The next morning the French fleet was at so great a distance, that the admiral did not think it expedient to renew the pursuit; it would, he alleged, be impossible to overtake them, and his own ships would be exposed to danger from a lee-shore: he therefore desisted from the attempt, and returned to Plymouth.

Though this battle by no means answered the expectations that British experience of nautical valour and skill naturally and reasonably formed, from a conflict between thirty of our ships of the line and thirty-two of the French, it effected one very important purpose; the French fleet being obliged to go to port to refit, several British fleets of merchantmen from the East and West Indies and the Mediterranean arrived in safety. Impartial exa-

* This evolution was afterwards the foundation of one of the principal charges against Admiral Keppel; it being represented as wearing the appearance of flight, and thus bringing disgrace on the British flag.

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miners very easily perceived that there was a want of concert in the disposition of the fleet on the day of battle. Admiral Keppel, in his letter to the admiralty, expressed himself, in general terms, satisfied with the conduct of officers and men; it, however, soon appeared that he was much dissatisfied with the procedure of Palliser.

Both the French and English fleets went again to sea in the month of August, but did not again meet during this campaign. Considerable captures were made by frigates and privateers on both sides, but the balance of prizes was greatly in favour of Britain. Two Liverpool privateers took a French homeward-bound East Indiaman, estimated at 320,000l.; and captain Dawson of the Mentor took another, valued at 240,000l.

Captures by
frigates and
privateers.

Balance
favourable
to England.

The American privateers, trusting to the alliance with France, came this year to the coast of Europe, and committed various depredations. The most daring commander of these ships was the noted adventurer Paul Jones. This person had been gardener to the earl of Selkirk, at a seat near Kirkcubright on the south-west coast of Scotland. Leaving his employment abruptly, on account of some umbrage which he had conceived against the family, he had betaken himself to sea, and by professional skill, together with intrepid boldness, arrived at the appointment which he then held. Jones, directing his efforts against the coasts with which he was best acquainted, landed at Whitehaven in Cumberland, and set fire to a ship in the harbour, with the intention of burning the town, but was driven away by the exertions of the inhabitants. From thence

Depreda-
tions by
Paul Jones;

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he plunders
the seat of
lord Sel-
kirk.

he proceeded over Solway Frith to the seat of lord Selkirk, and pillaged the house of all the plate, jewels, and other valuable effects; but though he greatly alarmed the lady and family (his lordship being in London), no violence was offered to any individual.

Crimination
and recri-
mination of
Keppel and
Palliser.

Admirals Keppel and Palliser had each numerous partisans; the difference between them, therefore, spread itself through their fleet, the navy, and kingdom. Keppel's supporters alleged, that if Palliser had obeyed the signal, the action must have been general, and the consequence a complete victory to Britain. Palliser's friends asserted, that the admiral lost the moment of victory, when, instead of bearing forward on the enemy with his full force, he moved to leeward, lost the afternoon by that movement, and thus allowed the enemy to escape. To this principal imputation of Mr. Palliser against Mr. Keppel, several other charges were added, that he had formed his line negligently; that he had not made proper dispositions for covering the rear division; that he might have renewed the battle on that afternoon; that the next morning the French fleet was not at so great a distance as to render pursuit unavailing; and that, in short, the admiral had not done his duty.

Whether Mr. Palliser's censure on Mr. Keppel was right or wrong, its ground was his conduct on the 27th and 28th of July, 1778. After that time, the vice-admiral again went to sea under the admiral; delivered him a letter, testifying his majesty's approbation of his conduct; corresponded with him in terms of friendship, and in his letters expressed a very high opinion of his superior

superior disinterestedness and zeal for the service*. This conduct, however, of Mr. Palliser relates only to his sincerity and consistency, but is totally irrelevant to the truth or falsehood of the charges. After the fleet returned to harbour for the winter, admiral Keppel was severely censured by ministerial publications, and admiral Palliser by writings favourable to opposition. In a newspaper of the latter class an anonymous letter was inserted, strongly reprehending sir Hugh Palliser. The vice-admiral, having read this production, applied to Keppel to justify his conduct, and required him for that purpose to sign a statement, which not only would have exculpated Palliser, but criminated himself. The admiral having refused to comply, Palliser published in one of the morning papers a long and particular detail of the action of the 27th of July, together with an introductory letter signed with his name. The performance teemed with censure against the conduct of the commander in chief. After indignant remarks and severe recrimination from Keppel, and reciprocal repetition of invective, the trials of both were ordered.

Admiral Keppel was first tried: the charge consisted of five articles, detailing the objects already narrated. After it had continued from the 7th of January 1779, until the 11th of February, the court not only acquitted the admiral, but declared the charges false, slanderous, and malicious. When the news of the sentence reached London, very general illuminations, instigated by political parti-

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They are
respectively
tried and
acquitted.

* See Proceedings of the Court-martial on admiral Keppel.

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fans, took place for two successive nights. The populace was inflamed by a notion very industriously disseminated, that the proceedings against admiral Keppel were at the instance of ministry, in order to screen their own misconduct in furnishing him with an inadequate force. Under this impression the mob committed many outrages on the houses of lord Sandwich, and other ministers.

Palliser, soon after the acquittal of Keppel, demanded a court martial on himself. The charge against him was not specific, but a general assertion of non-performance of duty; and after a trial which lasted from the 12th of April till the 5th of May, he was acquitted.

CHAP. XXII.

State of public sentiment and opinion at the meeting of parliament.—The nation is disposed to strenuous exertion.—The king's speech intimates dissatisfaction with the events of the campaign.—Strictures of opposition on the employment of Indian savages—appeal to the bishops thereon.—The dispute between Keppel and Palliser is introduced into parliament.—Mr. Fox makes a motion for censuring lord Sandwich—which is negatived.—Disputes arise in the navy between the partisans of the respective admirals.—Mr. Fox's motion for the removal of lord Sandwich.—Inquiry into the conduct of generals Burgoyne and Howe, and admiral lord Howe.—The evidence is at first favourable to sir William Howe.—Testimony of general Robertson and Mr. Galloway unfavourable.—Inquiry abruptly abandoned.—Inquiry into the conduct of Burgoyne—clears his character from specific false aspersions.—Riots in Scotland from enthusiastic zeal against popery—imputed by Mr. Burke to the supineness of ministers.—Rupture with Spain.—Spain evidently the aggressor.—Resolutions and measures of parliament thereon.—Session rises.

THE refusal of the Americans to accept of the proffered terms, their alliance with our ancient enemy, and their incitement of that enemy to join them in effort for the reduction of this country, now estranged from their cause many Britons, who formerly favoured them, and reprobated the conduct of administration. Impartial patriots reasoned, that deficient as ministers might be in the foresight, wisdom, and vigour requisite at so arduous a conjuncture, reproach and invective were not the means of enabling them to promote the national

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The nation
is disposed
to strenuous
exertion.The king's
speech inti-
mates dis-
satisfaction
with the
events of the
campaign.

advantage ; that we were now in a state of difficulty and danger, in which retrospection of causes was much less a subject of inquiry, than the means of extrication. Strenuous exertion was now generally deemed the only sure way of delivering us from war, and enforcing an honourable peace. To promote vigorous efforts, the most effectual means was unanimity. From these considerations, though the number of those who venerated the ability of ministers by no means increased, yet a much greater majority of the nation than before was now disposed to second their efforts.

Parliament met on the 25th of November, 1778. His majesty's speech very clearly, concisely, and justly described the conduct of France : " In the time of profound peace (said the king), without pretence of provocation or colour of complaint, the court of France hath not forborne to disturb the public tranquillity, in violation of the faith of treaties and the general rights of sovereigns ; at first, by the clandestine supply of arms and other aid to my revolted subjects in North America ; afterwards, by avowing openly their support, and entering into formal engagements with the leaders of the rebellion ; and, at length, by committing open hostilities and depredations on my faithful subjects, and by an actual invasion of my dominions in America and the West Indies." His majesty did not express himself satisfied with the success of the late campaign, but trusted to future efforts.

Opposition, considering the speech as the production not of the king but of the minister, contended, that in asserting the success had not been

been proportioned to our efforts, it declared a falsehood. The advantages gained were far greater than could be expected from the inferiority of our fleets, and the tardiness of our preparations. The speech regretted the failure of conciliatory measures. These were themselves humiliating to England, and unsatisfying to America : but, notwithstanding its defects and absurdities, the adoption of that scheme could not be said to be wholly useless ; it had destroyed every fallacious argument by which ministers had beguiled the nation into the fatal contest with America, for it surrendered all its professed objects. The supporters of ministry justified the past conduct of the war, and the preparation and distribution of the armaments that were employed in the summer. By delaying the departure of admiral Byron, D'Estaing was prevented from joining the Brest fleet, and giving France a decided superiority in the channel. The evacuation of Philadelphia was also, they asserted, a measure of wise policy, from the accession of France to the war : New York was much more central, nearer to the coast, and fitter for sending reinforcements to the West India islands, or wherever they might be wanted. Opposition admitted the propriety of evacuating Philadelphia, but contended that the reasons in which it was founded, demonstrated the folly of the whole system. The army in America was reduced to this alternative, either by retaining its acquisitions to divide and debilitate its own strength, or else to stand exposed to disgrace and mortification, and by retracing its steps, to shew the inutility of all its labours. No man could

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could expect to conquer a continent by possessing a single town ; therefore, while the nation persisted in carrying on an offensive war in America, whether our army advanced, retreated, or stood still, the effect would be the same, a fruitless, expensive, and cruel, because unnecessary, war. The amendment was rejected by a great majority. Patriotism and wisdom might before have dictated opposition to the ministerial measures respecting America, while there were hopes that by combating the plans of government they might produce a conciliatory change : now, however, the colonists were avowed enemies, and were engaged in a hostile confederacy against Britain ; and there was no alternative but victory or submission. If ministry might be justly charged with having brought us, by their ignorance and want of political abilities, into so bloody and expensive a war, opposition did not employ the most efficacious means for procuring a safe and honourable peace. • Perpetual invectives against administration were far from tending to depress the enemy, or strengthen the country. Common sense could never consider a regular and uniform system of obstruction to his majesty's councils, as the most effectual mode of promoting the success of his arms.

Strictures
of opposi-
tion on the
employ-
ment of
Indian
savages.

The chief object of opposition during this session, was to censure the conduct of the war, and to impute all real or alleged miscarriages to the incapacity and infatuation of ministers. On the 4th of December, a motion was made for an address to his majesty concerning the late manifesto of the commissioners, to declare the displeasure of parliament

ment at certain passages of the proclamation, as totally unauthorized by the act of the legislature for appointing these commissioners, and in themselves utterly inconsistent with the humanity and generous courage which at all times distinguished the British nation, subversive of the maxims which have been established among Christian and civilized communities, derogatory from the dignity of the crown of this realm, and tending to debase the spirit and to subvert the discipline of his majesty's armies. The supporters of the motion interpreted the passages in question in nearly the same manner as the Americans professed to have done, and considered them as replete with denunciations of the most savage barbarity. On this assumption their arguments proceeded, and speakers expatiated on the wickedness and madness of the new kind of warfare, which converted British foldiers into butchers, assassins, and incendiaries, and proposed for the model of civilized Britons the practices of Indian savages. Contrary, they alleged, as the threatened mode of carrying on war was to humanity, it was no less inimical to sound policy, as the colonists could retaliate on the coasts of England, Scotland, and Ireland; and various parts of his majesty's dominions must, by their exposed situation, suffer the most dreadful cruelties from retaliation: on these grounds, they proposed to request that it should be disavowed by his majesty.

To this deduction of consequences, ministers replied, by denying the principle; the proclamation, they contended, denounced no new species of war, no kind of hostilities dissimilar to those

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those which have been usually carried on between belligerent nations in every part of the civilized world. In the former part of the American war, Britain had considered the colonists not as enemies, but as subjects, partly rebellious from disposition, but chiefly misled by mischievous counsel; it had therefore been their wish to instruct and persuade, as well as to compel: but now the provincials had thrown themselves into the arms of French enemies, and were henceforth to be treated like any other foes, so as most speedily and effectually to annoy and weaken the hostile cause. This was the amount of the reprehended portion of the manifesto, such was the intention of its framers, such the meaning which its expressions plainly and explicitly conveyed. They could not therefore consent to address his majesty, that he might disavow intimations which, instead of censure, deserved the highest approbation. After a very hard contest between the censurers and supporters of this act of the commissioners, an occurrence took place, which appeared to give the former a considerable advantage. Governor Johnstone speaking on the subject, exhibited the irritation of violent passion, much more than the sound vigorous reasoning by which his eloquence was generally distinguished; he declared the manifesto to have meant a desolating war, and justified it in that view as not only right but necessary. Opposition contended, that this avowal by one who had been a commissioner, proved their assertion. Ministers, however, adhered to their rejection of the interpretation. In discussing this question, general Howe, after reprobating the
alleged

alleged plan of war, deviated from the question, to introduce a charge against the secretary, concerning his conduct to the generals who commanded in America. To the mal-administration of Germaine, Howe imputed his own request to resign his employment, and strongly urged the institution of a parliamentary inquiry, in order that the conduct both of the commanders and minister should be fully examined, justice done on all sides, and the nation acquainted with the true cause of that failure of success which it had hitherto experienced. The secretary, after expressing his astonishment at the accusation, and vindicating his conduct, declared, that he certainly should not object to an inquiry when regularly proposed, as he was confident it must terminate to his honour. Returning from irrelevant topics to the subject at issue, the house was called for a vote, and the motion was negatived by a majority of two hundred and nine to two hundred and twenty-two.

When the proclamation was discussed in the house of peers, an appeal was made to the bench of bishops, to exert that charity, humanity, and abhorrence of blood and cruelty, which were the leading tenets and distinguishing characteristics of christianity, upon a subject which not only came directly within their cognizance, but in which they seemed bound by their character to exert the peculiar and most exalted principles of their religion, in preventing the wanton butchery and destruction of mankind. Their interference was required to prevent the destruction, and spare the blood, not only of men and christians, but of Englishmen and protestants,

Appeal to
the Bishops
thereon.

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ants, like themselves ; to crush in the outset an abominable system of warfare, which in its progress and consequences would bring desolation and ruin on their own flocks. The legal powers with which they had been invested by the constitution for such pious purposes, would be found, in the present instance, fully equal to the duty and emergency. They were the moderators, ordained by the wisdom of the constitution, to check the rage, restrain the passions, and control the violence of temporal men. Their simple votes upon this occasion would at once fully express their detestation of the inhuman system ; and, joined with those of the secular lords who held the same principles, would cure its effects. The bishops were very far from contesting that it was incumbent on them to exert their abilities and influence for moderating the passions of men, and preventing the wanton effusion of christian blood ; but, as the lords in opposition had not proved that efforts against revolted subjects, who were leagued with inveterate enemies, were wanton, and they thought the annoyance of such foes necessary for self-defence, they did not consider themselves as justified in censuring the manifesto*.

Censure of ministry had constituted a considerable part of the proceedings of opposition in the

* Mr. Belsham, uniformly desirous of throwing out indirect or direct charges against our ecclesiastical establishment, in mentioning a protest that was entered on this occasion, says, "it is painful to remark, that the name of one bishop only, the venerable Shipley of St. Asaph, is to be found in the long and illustrious train of signatures affixed to this memorable protest." This censure of our prelates, Mr. Belsham supports by no proof ; it rests entirely upon his own authority.

former

former years of our dispute with the colonies ; but the reprehension had been combined with wise legislative propositions for removing the evils of which they complained. During the present session, reproach of administration constituted nearly the sole conduct by which they professed to discharge their duty, as senators deliberating for the good of their country. Every commander whose success had not answered the expectations formed from the means with which he was supplied, imputed his miscarriages to ministry ; and, as soon as he made that imputation, was supported by opposition with an eagerness that greatly outstripped the evidence. On the 28th of December, a debate arose in the house of commons, on a proposed vote of seventy thousand seamen for the service of the ensuing year. During the discussion, it was observed by opposition, that as very different representations had been given of the naval proceedings of Admiral Keppel's fleet on the 27th and 28th of July, an inquiry ought to be instituted for ascertaining the truth. Preliminary to such investigation, it was proposed, that as both officers, being members of the house, were then present, one or both of them should afford some satisfaction on the subject. Admiral Keppel having risen in compliance with this request, made a speech, of which, though some parts were sufficiently intelligible, there were others by no means explicit, and of which the exact import could not well be apprehended from the expressions themselves, though the tendency and intent might be gathered from various circumstances. He affirmed, that on the occasion in

8

question,

The dispute between Keppel and Palliser is introduced into parliament.

question, he had done his utmost against the enemy; the glory of the British flag had not been tarnished in his hands, and were he again in the same situation, he should act in the same manner; but the oldest and most experienced naval officers would discover something in every engagement with which they were before unacquainted, and he acknowledged, that day had presented to him something new. He impeached no man (he said) of a neglect of duty, because he was satisfied the officer who had been alluded to had manifested no want of courage, which was the quality most essential to a British seaman*. All his direct complaints or animadversions were limited to an anonymous letter imputed to that gentleman, and another letter avowed and signed by him, and both published in a newspaper. In the subsequent part of his speech, complaining of the abuse to which he had been exposed in diurnal publications, he said he did not charge ministers with being the authors or promoters of the invectives against him; they,

* The reader must here see very indefinite expressions, and reasoning by no means conclusive. What the alleged novelty that had occurred in the engagement was, he did not explain, though, without great likelihood of mistake, common sagacity might conjecture what meaning he intended to convey. *He impeached no man of neglect of duty, BECAUSE the officer alluded to manifested no want of courage.* Though courage be, as he observed, the most essential quality of a seaman, yet it is not his only duty, and there might be grounds of impeachment against an officer who had exerted courage. In fact, admiral Keppel does not disavow the existence of other grounds; but the exclusive admission of that quality tends by a natural construction to insinuate a denial, or, at least, a doubt of the performance of other necessary duties by the individual to whom he alluded.

on

on the contrary, seemed to be his friends, and carested and smiled upon him : or if any ministers were capable of vilifying and secretly aspersing him, and endeavouring to cut his throat behind his back, *he did not think they were then near him* *.

Sir Hugh Palliser charged the admiral with dark and indirect insinuations, called on him to state his charges, justified his own conduct, and expressed his wish for a public inquiry ; the institution and result of which I have already narrated as far as concerned the two admirals. Opposition in parliament condemned the admiralty for granting a court-martial at the instance of Palliser. They should (they said) have acted as moderators upon this occasion, given passion time to cool, and interposed their influence in healing the differences between two brave and valuable officers, at a time when their services were so much wanted : instead of which they blew up the flame, by precipitately receiving a rash, hasty, and passionate accusation ; and thereby drawing on the fatal dissensions in the naval service, and the numerous evils to the public, which they had themselves declared must be inevitable consequences of such a trial. The commissioners of the admiralty strenuously insisted their constitution to be such, that in all matters of accusation they were obliged to act ministerially, they had no judicial power ; that, when a complaint was

* Lord Sandwich, first lord of the admiralty, and a member of the other house, being in antiministerial works represented as both politically and personally inimical to admiral Keppel, was understood to be meant by this insinuation.

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preferred, they were, as a matter of course and in discharge of their office, not only compelled to receive it, but to give the necessary direction for the trial.

The vice-admiral had preferred an accusation consisting of five separate articles, or charges, properly drawn up, and specifically pointed. What line of conduct then could the admiralty board pursue? They must either prejudge the truth of those charges, or admit them to be such as were fit to be sent to the consideration of a court-martial. The first, they neither could, nor dared to do, being totally ignorant of their truth or falsehood; and with the second they were compelled to comply, because the matter allowed no other alternative. Opposition insisted that the admiralty was not only endued with discretionary powers competent to the purpose, but that the exercise of these was one of their great and principal duties, and among the most useful purposes of their institution. They represented their omission of so important a duty on the present occasion as highly culpable; but, in endeavouring to ascertain the powers of the admiralty, they argued more from their own conception of expediency, than from either statute or usage. The restrictions (they said) by which they pretended to be bound, would establish a principle that must destroy all naval service, and leave every superior officer at the mercy of his inferior. If the whole fleet of England were upon the point of sailing on the most sudden and critical emergency, whether for our immediate defence against invasion,
or

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or for the preservation of the most valuable foreign interest, according to this doctrine every petty officer, through folly, malice, or treachery, might prevent the whole design and operation, only by laying some charge against the commander in chief, which would necessarily detain all the principal officers, either as witnesses or judges. From this extraneous discussion, returning to the subject at issue, the house by the previous question dismissed the motion.

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During the recess of parliament the admiral's trial began; and on his acquittal, a motion was made in the house of commons, that the thanks of the house should be given to the honourable Augustus Keppel for his distinguished courage, conduct, and ability, in defending the kingdom in the course of the last summer, effectually protecting its trade, and more particularly for his having gloriously upheld the honour of the British flag on the 27th and 28th of July: the proposition was adopted, there being only one dissentient voice. The thanks of the lords, in nearly the same terms, were voted in four days after, with every external appearance of the most perfect unanimity. The impartial reader may, perhaps, find a difficulty in comprehending what the acts of Keppel were on the 27th and 28th of July, which drew forth from parliament such testimonies of gratitude; and what essential service the chief naval commander on that memorable occasion rendered to his country. It was very evident, that ministers did not conceive such an opinion of his public conduct, as their assent to the vote of thanks might indicate; but as the tide of popularity ran so high in his favour, they did not

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think it prudent to go against the current. This compliance with a proposition of their adversaries, manifestly contrary to their own judgment, was very frequent in lord North's administration; and appeared to arise from a desire of deprecating part of the censure which they so often experienced: an attempt, however, by unjust and unnecessary concessions to prevent obloquy, was an expedient of weakness and timidity, and demonstrated the absence of that firmness with which conscious wisdom and rectitude pursue their purposes. The admiralty informed Keppel, that in consequence of his acquittal he was required to resume his command; but though he complied with the requisition, yet the terms in which it was expressed manifesting no approbation of his conduct, he soon after asked and received his majesty's leave to resign.

Mr. Fox
makes a
motion for
censuring
lord Sand-
wich,

Mr. Fox followed the acquittal of his friend and the thanks of the houses, by a motion for censuring lord Sandwich, intended (he said) as a prelude to another for his removal from office. The alleged ground of censure was, the inadequacy of the force that had been furnished to Keppel: when he sailed with twenty ships of the line, there were thirty sail of the line in Brest water fit for service. Either ministers did or did not know that fact; if they knew it, it was an act of the highest criminality to commit the fate of this country to so great a disparity of force: on the other hand, if the first lord of the admiralty was ignorant of the state of the French navy, it was an ignorance totally inconsistent with the performance of his official

official duty. Ministers answered, that there was no evidence of the fact on which this charge was grounded: it appeared from the papers of the captured *Licorne*, that the alleged number was then in a state of preparation, but not that they were actually equipped; and in the conduct of the French it appeared, that they were not then ready for sea: since, though they knew that an English fleet of twenty ships of the line were at sea, they did not leave harbour till a fortnight after. The motion was rejected by a majority of 204 to 170, a difference much smaller than on any question that had occurred respecting the war. Mr. Fox made a second attack, which was directed against the whole of lord Sandwich's administration: stating the objects which ought to have been considered by the naval minister, the expence incurred, and the armament provided, he endeavoured to prove that the expence was sufficient for the attainment of all the objects, but that the force prepared was totally inadequate; on these grounds he moved a vote of censure. Admirals lord Howe and Keppel, by professional statements, and arguments derived from these, supported Mr. Fox's positions. Ministers answered, that the allegations of their opponents were founded in assumptions not supported by facts, and that they could not join in a vote of censure for unsubstantiated charges; on a division, the motion was rejected by a majority of two hundred and forty-six to one hundred and seventy-four.

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which is
negatived.

Great dissensions, originating in the dispute between Keppel and Palliser, were now prevalent

Dispute
arises in the
navy be-

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between the
partisans of
the respec-
tive admi-
rals.

in the navy, and very serious apprehensions were entertained of their consequences. A declaration of admiral Keppel in the last debate, that he would not accept of any command under the present ministry, powerfully tended to fan the flame. Several officers of high rank and character immediately quitted the service, or declared they could not act under the present system. The political parties reciprocally accused each other with having caused these discords.

Sir Philip Jennings Clerk, encouraged by the success which his bill for the exclusion of contractors the preceding session obtained in the house of commons, attempted its revival; but he soon found that a great change of opinion had taken place. It was rejected by a majority of 165 to 124. On the 10th of March, Mr. Frederic Montague proposed a bill for granting farther relief to protestant dissenting ministers and schoolmasters. The enlightened liberality of the age had, it was said, diminished the legal restrictions upon the Roman catholics, therefore the protestant ministers had a fair claim to partake of legislative indulgence. The extent and bounds of toleration depend entirely on expediency, founded in the nature of the opinions professed, and their practical tendency. In the conduct of the class whose relief was now sought, no objection of either justice or policy could be adduced to prevent it from being granted. In the present state of loss, calamity, and danger, it was necessary to unite the interests and affections of all our countrymen, and to concentrate into one mass all the remaining strength of the empire.

Two

Two classes of senators had, as we have seen, opposed former applications of dissenters: the first, from high church doctrines; the second, from views of political expediency. In the present instance, the second class, however, was favourable to the bill, which, though violently opposed by members of the first, passed both houses by great majorities, and received the royal assent. The chief object of this session continued to be the discussion of executorial conduct. Admiral Pigot, brother of lord Pigot, late governor of Madras, exhibited an historical detail of the object of his late brother's appointment, his conduct, the treatment which he experienced from the company's servants resisting his execution of the orders of their masters, his sufferings, and consequent death. After calling witnesses to establish his proceedings, he moved an address to his majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to give directions to his attorney-general to prosecute George Stratton, Henry Brooke, Charles Floyer, and George Mackay, esquires, for ordering the governor and commander in chief, George lord Pigot, to be arrested and confined under a military force; they being returned to England, and now within the jurisdiction of his majesty's courts of Westminster-hall. Mr. Stratton, being a member of parliament, and present at this very time, entered into a defence and vindication of his own conduct and that of his colleagues, in which he imputed their proceedings to a necessity arising from the violent and arbitrary acts of lord Pigot; but his arguments made so little impression on the house, that the resolutions were immediately adopted without one dissenting voice. The prosecution

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Mr. Fox's
motion for
the removal
of lord
Sandwich.

took place; each was sentenced to pay a fine of 1000*l.* a very inconsiderable sum to men of immense fortunes, and which could hardly operate as a punishment.

Mr. Fox, on the 19th of April, moved an address to the throne for the dismissal of lord Sandwich from his majesty's service, for misconduct in office. The alleged grounds were the same collectively which had before separately been rejected by the house; Mr. Fox, however, with his usual ingenuity, endeavoured to shew that the case was different, between a motion for censure and for removal: the former were judicial inquiries, the present was a deliberative question of expediency. A motion for censure required, in point of justice, a specification and certainty of the offences imputed; a motion for dismissal from employment ought to be adopted, if it was probable that the business of the employer would be better performed by another. The whole of the subject proposed might be proved in a few short questions and answers. Was lord Sandwich equal to the performance of his official duties, with safety and honour to the nation? Has he hitherto done so? What reason is there for supposing that he who has failed in his past duties, shall act more ably for the future? The majority of members did not admit Mr. Fox to have established the alleged unfitness of lord Sandwich, and therefore voted against his removal.

Inquiry
into the
conduct of
generals
Burgoyne
and Howe,
and admiral
lord Howe.

Much censure had been thrown out against general Howe, especially in writings alleged to be patronized by ministers; and it was confidently and vehemently asserted, that, if his conduct had been wise and vigorous, he might have repeatedly terminated

terminated the war. Both the Howes strongly urged an inquiry, as the sure means of vindicating their character. Lord North replied, that as government had advanced no charge against the noble brothers, no vindication was necessary, and that ministers had no share in the invectives; but though he did not approve of an inquiry, he would not oppose its institution, and readily agreed to the production of the papers which were wanted for carrying it into effect. In these was included the whole correspondence between the ministers and commanders in America, from Howe's arrival at Boston in 1775, to his departure from Philadelphia in 1778; also the accounts, returns, and other documents, tending to shew the state of the army at different periods; the real movements and operations, as well as the different plans of action, which had been proposed, discussed, or concerted by the ministers and generals. Ministers apprehending that their own counsels, and not the conduct of the commanders, was the real object of the scrutiny, proposed that the examination of witnesses should be confined to military subjects; and on the 6th of May, lord Cornwallis, major-general Grey, sir Andrew Snape Hammond, major Montresor, chief engineer, and sir George Osborne, were examined. The result of their evidence was, that the force sent to America was at no time equal to the subjugation of the colonies; that the difficulty chiefly arose from the almost unanimous hostility of the people to the British government, and the natural obstructions of the country, so abounding in woods, rivers, hills, and defiles. Their evidence
 descending

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The evi-
dence at
first favour-
able to sir
William
Howe.

descending to accounts of particular actions, from which the chief censure of the general had arisen, tended to justify his conduct. General Howe himself endeavoured to prove, that he had uniformly stated to the American minister the utter impossibility of reducing America without a much greater force; that he had accompanied his proposed plan for the campaign of 1777, with a requisition of a reinforcement of twenty thousand men, or at the least fifteen thousand, as indispensably necessary; that the minister had uniformly supposed the number of loyalists to be much greater than it really was; trusting to their co-operation, he could not be convinced that so great a reinforcement was wanted, and therefore had not sent a fifth part of the number. Concerning the northern expedition, no concert had been proposed between him and the general of that army, nor did he hear any support was expected from him, until a letter from the secretary, which reached him in the Chesapeake, expressed a hope that he might be able to co-operate with Burgoyne. Ministers perceiving that the evidence adduced was not only intended, but directed to the crimination of themselves, much more than an inquiry into the conduct of the general, proposed to call witnesses on the other side. The chief evidences were major-general Robertson, deputy governor of New York, and Mr. Joseph Galloway, an American lawyer, who, after having been a member of the first congress, joined the British army. The testimony of Mr. Robertson rather expressed general disapprobation of sir William Howe's conduct, than advanced particular charges: Mr. Galloway's

Testimony
of general
Robertson
and Mr.
Galloway
unfavour-
able.

Galloway's accusations, specific and direct, included the various topics of military error or misconduct which had been so repeatedly alleged against the general. But, without questioning the veracity of Mr. Galloway, his competency may be doubted: he was chiefly stating, not facts, but opinions, of which the subject was a detailed series of military operations; and he being no military man, the less authority was due to his judgment. Mr. Galloway made one very extraordinary assertion, that four-fifths of the Americans were zealously attached to the British government; if the proportion of loyalists had been really so great, they could have easily overpowered the revolvers, without the assistance of one British soldier: so exaggerated an account, manifesting at least glaringly inaccurate observation, very much weakened the credibility of his assertions. Sir William Howe requested leave to call witnesses to controvert Mr. Galloway's asseverations: ministers objected to this mode, as productive of too much delay; he was, however, allowed to cross-examine this witness. A day being fixed for that purpose, and sir William not having attended at the appointed hour, the committee was suddenly dissolved, and the question at issue was left undecided. Opposition had eagerly demanded and prosecuted an inquiry, while the testimony in exculpating the commander tended to criminate ministry; but when the evidence took a different turn, their ardour manifestly subsided. Respecting general Howe, the principal witnesses in his favour were much more competent than the principal witnesses against him: lord Cornwallis and general Grey,

The inquiry
is abruptly
abandoned.

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Grey, military men, spoke concerning actions in which they were themselves engaged; Mr. Galloway, not a military man, spoke from hearsay. It must, however, be observed, that in inquiries concerning *what might have been done*, testimony is necessarily inference, not the result of recollection and veracity, but also of opinion and conjecture. The judgment of the wisest men, concerning subjects in which they are peculiarly skilled, may be warped by their affections. Many other professional men, having considered in detail the force and opportunities of general Howe, drew a totally different conclusion.

Whatever estimate the impartial reader may have formed of the merit of general Howe's exertions, he must immediately perceive, that the inquiries proved ministers to have continued in that state of misinformation and ignorance respecting the sentiments of the Americans, in which their fatal plans and measures originated; and also, that they did not send to America the force which the general required*. Ministers, by patronising Mr. Galloway, and other accusers of the late commander, demonstrated themselves disposed to promote an opinion of his culpability. If they conceived the late commander not to have discharged his duty, ministers, in not ordering a court-martial to establish the imputed

* Our immortal war minister, secretary Pitt, after he planned an expedition, and selected an officer to conduct it, immediately asked him, what force he would deem necessary? On being informed, he always ordered a still stronger armament; but different; indeed, was the war minister of 1759, from the war minister of 1777.

miscon-

misconduct, neglected their duties to their king and country; if they thought him innocent, it was mean and illiberal in them to favour and pension his revilers *: if he was guilty, they acted weakly and timidly in not bringing forward the proofs. Lord North and his colleagues, however, are exempted from one charge, often adduced against the counsellors who have appointed a commander in chief to conduct an expedition that proves unsuccessful. His military reputation *at the time he received* this last commission, justified the appointment; though there might be persons whose expectations were not fulfilled by general Howe's campaigns, none could with justice at the out-set have affirmed that he was a man whose talents and character did not justify reasonable expectations of success.

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General Burgoyne also insisted on an inquiry into his conduct. On his return from America the former year, he had applied for a court-martial; which was refused him, on the ground that while he was prisoner his preceding conduct was not cognizable by any tribunal in this country. He had been refused admittance to the sovereign, and complained loudly of the court and ministry; he repeatedly solicited a parliamentary investigation, but Germaine had declared that his request could not be granted until after a military scrutiny, which he affirmed to be at that time impracticable; and when an

Inquiry into
the conduct
of Bur-
goyne

* Mr. Galloway, and several others of inferior note, who inveighed against general Howe, received pensions. Galloway's evidence was published in a pamphlet, and circulated with great industry by the friends of administration.

inquiry

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cleared his
character
from speci-
fic false
aspersions.

inquiry was allowed to general Howe, Burgoyne having resumed his solicitation, his requisition was at last agreed to. The principal witnesses were, sir Guy Carleton, the earl of Balcarras, captain Money, the earl of Harrington, major Forbes, captain Bloomfield, and colonel Kingston. The evidence tended to overthrow some severe charges and censures which had been insinuated or directed against Burgoyne's conduct, and particularly detected two falsehoods then very commonly believed: first, that general Philips, the evening before the convention of Saratoga, offered to force his way, with a specified part of the army, from Saratoga back to Ticonderago: secondly, that the late gallant Frazer had expressed the utmost disapprobation of the measure of passing the Hudson's river. The question, however, was undecided, whether his orders for proceeding to Albany were peremptory or conditional: some doubts were also left, respecting both the design and the mode of conducting the expedition to Bennington. These inquisitorial proceedings occupied parliament during the greater part of the session.

Riots in
Scotland
from en-
thusiastic
zeal against
popery,

Riots, which had arisen in Scotland from groundless apprehensions concerning popery, were, by the ingenuity of opposition, made subjects of accusation against ministry. The Roman catholic bill, that passed during the preceding session, excited great alarms in North Britain, as it was supposed to be the intention of parliament to extend the relief to the Scottish catholics. When the law was enacted in 1778, the general assembly of the church of Scotland happened to be sitting. The well-intended but unadvised zeal of some members of that respectable

able body, proposed for clerical discussion the late act, and made a motion for petitioning the legislature not to extend the bill or any of its provisions to Scotland, and supported the proposition by detailing the common arguments against popery. Mr. Dundas, a lay-member of the assembly, shewed that the law repealed in England had not originated in fear of popery, and was not intended as a bulwark against its encroachments, but sprang from a design of the jacobite party to render king William and his whig ministers unpopular: that the jacobites expected the whigs would oppose that bill, and intended to impute that opposition to a partiality for the Romish faith; but that the whigs perceiving the object of their adversaries, suffered it to pass, though very inconsistent with their principles of freedom and toleration *. Doctor Robertson, with some able coadjutors of his own order, deprecated the agitation which tended so much to excite the alarm and discontent of the people, and demonstrated the absurdity of anticipating the intention of legislature, by petitioning parliament against a bill not actually proposed. The motion was negatived through the influence of those able and enlightened men, though, it produced the effect which their sagacity had apprehended. The populace was soon taught to conceive, that the successful opposition sprang from a predilection for the popish doctrines, and burned with zeal against antichrist. To oppose popery,

* The Author, who was present, remembers, that Mr. Dundas, to justify his positions, read the account of the law from Burnet's History of his own Times.

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associations were formed by the lower classes in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other towns, under the instigation and conduct of fanatical and turbulent demagogues; and the populace rose to tumult and riot in various places. At Edinburgh and Glasgow the enthusiastic spirit fermented to an alarming degree; mobs set fire to popish chapels, and the dwelling-houses of the catholics; and many zealots of higher ranks and better opportunities of knowledge, were absurd enough to approve of these outrages, *on the ground that it was proper for the people spiritedly to manifest their hatred of popery.* The sufferers applied to Mr. Burke to present a petition to parliament, praying for a compensation on account of the losses which they had sustained. In promoting this application, Mr. Burke and his friends very strongly attacked the supineness of government, to which they imputed the mad violence of the populace; but they adduced no proof that ministers had been negligent, or that the disturbances had arisen from causes over which they had any control.

are imputed by Mr. Burke to the supineness of ministers.

Although this session lasted from November to July, and produced more political debate than any during the former part of the contest; yet, long as it continued, and busy as it was, its acts are of very little legislative importance. The affairs of Ireland were again submitted to the consideration of the house, and various proposals were made for affording relief and assistance to the commercial interest of the sister kingdom; but no regular plan was formed respecting the nature or extent of the aid which was to be expected and offered. The discussion

sion was in a considerable degree confined to barren generalities. Several propositions were at length offered, but their practical consideration was deferred to the following session.

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Rupture
with Spain.

On the 17th of June, the ministers brought a message to parliament, concerning a hostile manifesto that was presented by the Spanish ambassador. To introduce this properly to the reader, it is necessary to revert to the king of Spain's character and disposition, together with the circumstances of the times. Though nothing could be more contrary to the solid interests of his kingdom than hostilities with Great Britain, yet Charles III., a monarch of weak understanding, narrow views, and the childish irritability of feeble minds, had, as we have seen, from a fancied insult, cherished against England an enmity, which a real injury could not have justified when so adverse to the commercial and political benefit of his country. He was farther inflamed by that spirit of rivalry, which, in confined and uncomprehensive understandings, values comparative superiority above positive good. He was more anxious to impede the prosperity of England, than to advance the prosperity of Spain. In these causes chiefly originated the actual war and intended hostilities which this history has already recorded. When the present quarrel broke out between France and England, Spain, not yet prepared for the contest, professed a determination to observe a strict neutrality. She had offered her services as a mediator between the belligerent powers, and proposed to mix the separate claims of France and Spain into one view and treaty. On this principle, so strongly

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and justly reprobated by Mr. Pitt in the former war, a negotiation was opened. France now proposed an armistice, and a congress to be held at Madrid, whither the colonists should be permitted to send commissioners, and meanwhile be treated as an independent power. Both courts well knew that these terms were totally inadmissible, on the avowed principles of the court of London; the offer was therefore nugatory and insulting. Spain now openly avowed her hostile purposes, and on the 16th of June delivered a manifesto to the British secretary for foreign affairs. The manifesto in its object was nearly the same with those which had been often presented by the courts of Versailles and Madrid; it consisted of charges, without proof, of hostilities committed by England; and praise, contrary to proof, of the moderation and justice of France and Spain. It contained general allegations, of Spanish territories invaded, and Spanish subjects murdered by English, without any specification of the time and place in which the alleged atrocities were committed, or any evidence that they had ever been perpetrated. It stated demands of satisfaction, but adduced no evidence that complaints had ever before been made, or that any injuries existed: it was merely a tissue of assertion without proof; and which neither then, nor ever afterwards, received the slightest support from documents or any other evidence*. As she, by her hostile manifesto, avowing her junction with the enemies and revolted subjects of Great Britain, committed an act of open

Spain evidently the aggressor.

* See Spanish manifesto, in State Papers of 1779.

and

and flagrant hostility, and brought no proof of any previous hostility on the part of England, SPAIN WAS EVIDENTLY THE AGGRESSOR *.

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When the manifesto was laid before parliament, opposition at first professed to join in a resolution to support the war against the house of Bourbon ; but, as they descended to detail, their eloquence was as usual directed to the crimination of ministers, much more than the security of their country. Lord North proposed to double the militia ; he, however, professedly made his proposition as a subject of discussion and modification. Three opinions were prevalent on this question : one recommended the adoption of the project as it was originally framed ; the second preferred a mixed scheme, which, with a small augmentation of the militia, proposed to levy distinct volunteer corps ; and the third objected to any increase of the militia, and would trust to the spirit and patriotism of the nobility and gentry in raising forces, according to the offers which had been already made, and to the efforts of the people,

* I herein differ from Mr. Belsham, who asserts that Britain was the aggressor ; but as this writer brings no proof of the truth of his assertion, and Spain, by her commencement of hostilities, brought such proof against the assertion, I must, instead of relying on the authority, rest upon the evidence, that not my country but its enemies began the war. I confess, that though, as an historian, I hold myself bound to narrate the truth, whether favourable or unfavourable to Britain, as a Briton I feel more pleasure in recording its justice, than I should derive from being under the necessity of exhibiting its injustice ; and that I have a satisfaction in being convinced these islands did not provoke the confederacy of the great continental powers.

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who would unquestionably come forward to defend their king and country. The bill received such great alterations in the house of lords, as totally to change its original nature; and in that state, it passed into a law.

Supplies.

The supplies granted for 1779, amounted to seventy thousand seamen, and thirty thousand three hundred and forty-six soldiers, besides the army in America and the West Indies, which, including foreigners, consisted of about forty thousand. The services of the year were then estimated to require 15,072,654*l.* The land-tax and duties upon malt furnished their proportions; seven millions were raised by annuities; and a lottery, consisting of 49,000 tickets, was distributed among the subscribers, in the proportion of seven tickets, at 1*ol.* each ticket, for every thousand pounds subscribed*. Lord North said he wanted to have borrowed eight millions, but could procure no more than seven. The whole amount of the money raised by a lottery, was to be distributed into prizes†. The sinking fund furnished 2,071,854*l.* Exchequer bills to the amount of 3,400,000*l.* were voted; and other less considerable articles of revenue completed the ways and means. A vote of credit for a million, was afterwards passed; and the whole navy debt was left undischarged. The terms on which the loan was filled, were, besides the douceur of lottery tickets, three per cent. *per annum*, and an annuity of 3*l.* 15*s.* for the term of twenty-nine years, for every 100*l.* The annual interest payable on the money borrowed

* History of Britain during lord North's administration, p. 355.

† Ibid.

amounted

amounted to 472,500l.; to raise which, an additional duty of five per cent. was laid on the full produce of the excise (beer, ale, soap, candles, and hides excepted), which was estimated at 282,109l.; a tax on post horses of one penny a mile, 164,250l.; and an additional duty of five per cent. on cambric, 36,000l. Various strictures were made on the profusion of public money, and motions of inquiry and censure were repeatedly proposed, and respectively negatived, by ministerial majorities. The session was closed on the 3d of July, by a speech in which the king expressed his cordial thanks for the exertions of parliament for the public welfare in the various departments of national service. He rejoiced that the courage and constancy of his people rose with the difficulties which they had to encounter; and doubted not, that their efforts would finally prevail against their multiplied enemies.

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XXII.HOLLAND
in the West
Indies.

CHAP. XXIII.

Hostilities in the West Indies.—Superior force of the French.—British, notwithstanding, capture St. Lucie.—Byron sails northwards to escort the mercantile fleet—in his absence D'Estaing captures Dominica, St. Vincent's, and Grenada.—Engagement between the French fleet and Byron's indecisive.—North America.—Expedition to Georgia under colonel Campbell—who reduces the province.—Maitland's battle with Lincoln—impetuous courage of Fraser's highlanders.—D'Estaing, with a large force, arriving in Georgia, invests Savannah.—Memorable defence of that town by the British—the siege is raised.—Clinton continues a war of detachments.—Gallant exploits of the British troops, without any important result.—Europe.—Perilous situation of Britain.—Combined fleet parade in the channel.—English fleet, in imitation of Drake, endeavours to draw their armada to the narrow seas.—Enemy retreat.—France threatens an invasion.—Loyal and patriotic spirit and efforts of all parties to resist the enemy.—Voluntary contributions.—British fleet keeps the seas, and protects our trade.—Investment of Gibraltar.

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1779.

THE first warlike operations of 1779 were in the West Indies: hostilities, indeed, had commenced there in 1778, but so late in the season, that, not to break the unity of the narrative, I include them in the account of the present year.

A considerable force had been stationed in the French West Indies, under the marquis de Bouille, who, by a sudden attack, made himself master of the island of Dominica. The success of this enterprise caused a general alarm through the British

Hostilities
in the West
Indies.

British islands; the defence of which was then entrusted to two ships of the line, under admiral Barrington. A reinforcement, however, consisting of three ships of the line, three of fifty guns, and three frigates, joined the admiral in the month of December, having on board general Grant, with a large body of land forces. The British armament, with this accession, sailed for St. Lucie, and arrived there on the 13th of December. D'Estaing now reached Martinique, and being joined by transports with nine thousand troops on board, conceived the hopes of crushing the small fleet which Barrington commanded, and reducing most of the windward British islands, before admiral Byron could come to their assistance: he threatened Barbadoes, St. Vincents, Grenada, and Tobago; but learning the unexpected attack that was made upon St. Lucie, he was for the time obliged to derange his plans, and confine himself to defence. On the 17th of December, he landed at St. Lucie: the following day, he assailed the British forces; and, though much superior in number, after an obstinate contest, was defeated, and obliged to abandon the island, which soon after surrendered to the British arms. On the 6th of January, Byron's fleet arriving at St. Lucie, rendered our forces superior to the French; whereupon d'Estaing now acted on the defensive, and for five months kept himself in harbour within the bay of Fort Royal. Both fleets received reinforcements during the winter; the English were joined by a squadron of ships under commodore Rowley, and the French by an armament headed by count de Grasse.

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Superiority
of the
French.

The British,
notwith-
standing,
capture St.
Lucie.

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Byron sails
northwards
to escort the
mercantile
fleet.In his ab-
sence,
d'Estaing
captures
Dominica,
St. Vin-
cent's, and
Grenada.

Admiral Byron, on the 6th of June, left St. Lucie, to conduct the merchant ships which were appointed to assemble at St. Christopher's previously to their departure for England. In the absence of the British fleet, d'Estaing commenced offensive operations: a force, consisting of four thousand and fifty men, under the command of chevalier de Trolong du Romain, sailed from Martinique for St. Vincent's, where they arrived on the 12th of June; they immediately effected a landing, and opened a communication with the Caribbs. The original inhabitants of the island, who considered the British settlers as intruders on their possessions, were ready to join the French. The garrison consisted of three hundred and fifty effective men, besides those who were confined by sickness; with such a handful of men, conceiving defence impracticable, lieutenant-colonel Etherington, the commander of the forces, and Mr. Valentine Morris, the governor of the island, surrendered St. Vincent's on the same terms which had been granted to Dominica. Reinforced by La Motte Piquette, who arrived with troops and naval stores from Europe, d'Estaing sailed against Grenada, having twenty-six ships of the line, and near ten thousand land forces. The fate of the island was inevitable; but the resolute defence made by lord Macartney, the governor, long protected the settlement, until a hill that commanded the fort being forced, the British leader proposed to capitulate; but the French general having proposed terms unusually hard, the fort and island were necessitated to surrender at discretion. The appearance of the Eng-
lish

Engage-
ment be-
tween the
French fleet
and Byron's,
indecisive.

lish fleet, consisting of twenty-one ships of the line, though too late to save Grenada, interposed seasonably for the preservation of Tobago, the only possession which remained to England of the islands which were ceded to her at the peace of Paris. A partial engagement followed, in which admiral Barrington, in the Prince of Wales, with the captains Sawyer and Gardner, in the Boyne and Sultan, sustained the whole weight of the French van. The action was indecisive; many of our ships suffered considerable damage, especially in their rigging; and admiral Barrington received a slight wound. The rapidly successive loss of our three valuable islands, had greatly alarmed our remaining West India possessions; but the approach of the hurricanes, added to the loss of men in the last action, repressed any farther attempts of d'Estaing during that season; and he soon after sailed for North America.

North
America.

The contrivers of a project, which, notwithstanding the failure of expected success, they still deem practicable, must rest their hopes of ultimate attainment on a variation of means. Repeated discomfiture did not convince British ministers that the colonies were not to be subdued: still our counsellors conceived they might be reduced through a change of plans, which should be carried into execution by more skilful and vigorous efforts. Alteration of schemes was one of the chief characteristics of the belligerent policy of government during the contest with America, which, in a great measure, was a war of experiments,

The

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The northern provinces had been the first scenes of hostilities, and afterwards the middle states; but the southern colonies, with little interruption, had been exempted from invasion. Overthrow in the north, and inefficiency in the middle, government now hoped would be compensated by victory in the south; thither it was resolved to direct our efforts, and during the remainder of the conflict, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia, were the principal theatres of active enterprize.

Since, indeed, it was resolved to persevere in the attempted reduction, there were strong reasons for carrying our arms to the southern provinces: these colonies produced the commodities which were most wanted, and most valuable in the European markets. France took off an immense quantity of their staple products; and the quiet and security which they had hitherto enjoyed, admitted so vigorous a cultivation, that their export trade seemed little otherwise affected by the war, than what it suffered from the British cruizers. Thus, in effect, the continental credit in Europe was principally upheld by the southern colonies; and they became the medium through which they received those supplies, that were not only indispensably necessary to the support of the war, but even to the conducting of the common business and affairs of life*. Besides, it was believed, that, in the provinces in question, a much greater proportion of the inhabitants was well affected to the British government,

* See Annual Register, 1779, p. 29.

than

than upon trial had been found among their northern countrymen; and ministers, in spite of experience, received those rumours as authentic information. It was therefore resolved to make an essay in the south, and to begin with Georgia. This province, though in itself neither great nor powerful, possessed considerable importance as a granary to the invaders, and a road to farther progress. It was extremely fruitful in rice, and thus could supply provisions to the royalists when at such a distance from their principal magazines; and being contiguous to East Florida, a loyal colony, where general Prevost was stationed with a body of troops, if recovered, would prove a key to the Carolinas. These reasons determined the British to undertake an expedition to Georgia; and towards the close of the preceding year, the undertaking was commenced by a detachment from the main army.

The land force destined to execute this project, consisted of the seventy-first regiment, two battalions of Hessians, and four of North and South Carolina loyalists, with a body of artillery, amounting in all to three thousand five hundred men, under the command of lieutenant-colonel Campbell. Major-general Prevost was ordered to join the expedition from East Florida, and take the command of the whole; but so ably did Campbell form his plans of attack, and so well was he supported by the spirit and bravery of his little army, and the cordial and zealous co-operation of commodore Parker and the naval forces, that the reduction of the province was completed before the arrival of Prevost.

Expedition
to Georgia,
under colo-
nel Camp-
bell, who
reduces the
province.

Having

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Having left New York in November 1778, the British commander arrived, on the 23d of December, at the mouth of the Savannah river, upon which Savannah, the capital of Georgia, is situated, about fifteen miles from the sea. Near the metropolis, but farther down the river, How, the American general, was stationed with several regiments, for the double purpose of opposing the landing of the British, and protecting the town. Not fearing these adversaries, Campbell, on the 29th, disembarked his troops, in the face of the provincial musquetry and artillery. The first that reached the land was captain Cameron, with the light infantry of Fraser's highlanders: the Americans received them with a general volley, by which the captain and a few others were killed. The native courage of the highlanders, by the death of their commander stimulated to revenge, hurried on with a force which numbers in vain endeavoured to oppose, and drove the Americans to the woods. Campbell, pursuing the dismayed foes, overtook them at a post near Savannah, which was so strong as to induce How to risque an engagement. His right was covered by a thick woody swamp, and the houses of a plantation filled with riflemen; his left reached the rice marshes upon the river; the town and fort of Savannah protected the rear; the artillery was disposed advantageously on both sides, and a trench of one hundred yards wide, together with a marshy rivulet, guarded the front. The colonists being somewhat more accessible on the left than in any other situation, there they expected the brunt of the British attack, and

and thither directed their chief attention and vigilance. The sagacity of Campbell discovered their opinions and views; and farther to encourage their belief, made a feint to send troops in that direction. Meanwhile having discovered a private path on the right of the enemy, he dispatched sir James Baird, with the light troops, to turn the enemy's rear: conducted by a negro through the secret track, Baird accomplished his object, and assailed the Americans. Campbell finding that the stratagem had succeeded, now bore on the enemy in front. Thus surrounded, the provincials were completely defeated and routed, with the loss of four hundred men, while only seven of the British fell. This victory decided the fate of Savannah, which yielded without farther struggle; all Lower Georgia followed its example; and a great majority of the inhabitants not only abstained from resistance, but even took the oath of allegiance. The next care of Campbell was to form regulations for the tranquillity and government of the province; which duty he effected with great policy and ability *. He now resolved to prosecute his success by an expedition into Upper Georgia, where many were said to be well-disposed towards the British government, and only to wait for the support of the king's troops, that they might with safety declare their attachment. The march of Campbell, therefore, into the inland country had a double object; to establish a communication with the loyalists, and to reduce the remaining part of Georgia. Augusta, the second town of the province, lies

* See Stedman, vol. ii. p. 72.

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upon the southern bank of the river Savannah, and is distant from the sea-coast about one hundred and fifty miles. The previous arrangements necessary for marching through such an extent of country, in many places thinly and in some not at all inhabited, were so well adjusted by lieutenant-colonel Campbell, that he met with few interruptions, except such as arose from the water-courses in his way, the bridges over which were in most places destroyed. Upon his approach to Augusta, a body of provincials, under the command of brigadier-general Williamson, quitted the town, and retreated across the river*. From Augusta, Campbell dispatched lieutenant-colonel Hamilton towards the frontiers of Carolina, to encourage the loyalists by assurances of protection.

Alarmed by the rapid advances of the royal troops, the provincials made dispositions for arresting their progress. General Lincoln, commander of the Americans in the south, soon arrived on the northern bank with a great and increasing force. Campbell, not finding Augusta tenable, retreated down to Savannah; while Lincoln marched along the northern banks, with a view to cross the river and re-conquer Georgia. While Lincoln was thus engaged, general Prevost conceived hopes of surprising Charlestown: on the 10th of May, accordingly, the British troops reached Ashley's Ferry in the evening, and having passed the river, appeared before Charlestown the following day. On the 12th, the town was summoned to surrender, but to no

* Stedman, vol. ii. p. 106.

purpose.

purpose. The general having viewed the lines, was convinced, that, though unfinished, they were not to be forced without a loss of men which he could not spare. He knew that the garrison was more numerous than his troops, and that general Lincoln, having heard of his advance, was hastening to its relief from the back country with a numerous army; he therefore retired towards Georgia, took possession of John's Island, a place separated from the main by a small inlet from the sea, and posted himself, until the arrival of ammunition expected from New York. Hearing that Lincoln was advancing to Lower Georgia, he departed for Savannah, in order to place the fort in the best possible condition of defence; and left to colonel Maitland the command of John's Island, with a garrison consisting of the first battalion of the seventy-first regiment, much weakened and reduced in its numbers, a corps of Hessians, part of the North and South Carolina loyalists, and a detachment of artillery, amounting to about eight hundred men fit for duty. General Lincoln, apprised that the garrison was in a weak state, projected to cut it off; and on the 20th of June, he advanced against this handful, with about five thousand men. An attack on the British piquets first gave the alarm; on which colonel Maitland immediately ordering his soldiers to arms, dispatched two companies of highlanders to observe the motions of the enemy, until he should come up himself with his whole force. The impetuous valour of those brave mountaineers hurried them on too far, and their indignant courage forbade them to retreat,

Maitland's
battle with
Lincoln.

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Impetuous
valour of
Frazer's
highlanders.

when furrounded by superior numbers: falling in with the left wing of the provincials, they commenced an attack against ten times their own force, and maintained the contest until all their officers* were either killed or wounded; of the two companies, only eleven made good their retreat †. This partial success emboldened the Americans to attack the British lines, and a regiment of Hessians, overborne with the provincial force, had given way, and were communicating their confusion to the rest of our troops, when the remaining companies of the highlanders, by a movement equally judicious, bold, and rapid, stayed the progress of the American army, avenged the cause of their fallen countryman, and gave a decisive turn to the fortune of the day. The heroism diffused itself over the British troops: the skill of colonel Maitland seized the happy moment, rallied the retreating Hessians, and repelled and routed the enemy. The Americans, dispirited by so unsuccessful an attack, attempted no farther offensive operations until the unexpected arrival of d'Estaing re-animated their hopes of expelling the English from Lower Georgia. Informed of the coming of so powerful an auxiliary, Lincoln

* Among the slain was their brave commander, captain Charles Campbell, the eldest son and heir of the house of Ardochattan in Argyleshire, a youth whom the writer recollects as a class-fellow at St. Andrew's college, and of high promise. His conduct, during four campaigns in America, acquired him great military reputation, which he was rapidly increasing, when, in the 24th year of his age, he fell fighting for his king and country.

† See Stedman, vol. ii. p. 117.

marched

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marched to join the French forces. Prevost prepared for the defence of Savannah, and dispatched orders to colonel Maitland to repair thither with all possible haste ; old fortifications were strengthened, and new works constructed, under the direction of a masterly engineer, captain Moncrief. D'Estaing having landed his troops without waiting for the Americans, in terms of the most boasting bravado and illiberal insolence summoned the British general to surrender. Despising the gasconade, Prevost considered how he might gain time until the arrival of colonel Maitland ; he therefore sent a civil answer, desiring a truce for twenty-four hours. The Frenchman, in the confidence of vanity, doubted not that a surrender would be determined, and that the period wanted was for the purpose of drawing up propositions of capitulation ; he therefore complied with the request. Meanwhile colonel Maitland, having marched with astonishing rapidity, reached Savannah ; and thus reinforced, the general notified his resolution to defend the place to the last extremity. Lincoln being now arrived, the combined armies made dispositions for carrying on the siege ; ground was broken on the 23d of September, and the British interrupted the operations by several successful sallies. On the 4th of October, the batteries of the besiegers being opened, a request was made by general Prevost, that the women and children might be permitted to leave the town, and embark on board vessels in the river, which should be placed under the protection of the count D'Estaing, and await the issue of the siege. This request, so agreeable to

Vol. III. K humanity,

D'Estaing
with a large
force arriv-
ing in
Georgia,
invests
Savannah.

Memorable
defence of
that town by
the British.

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humanity, was refused in terms of insulting rudeness; which shewed that the French commander, having long proved himself destitute of the honour*, was no less deficient in the manners, of a gentleman, and that dereliction of integrity often brings along with it a disregard for the decencies and proprieties of civilized life. On the morning of the 9th, D'Estaing made an attack upon the British lines; two feigned assaults were intended to draw the attention of the besieged to the centre and left, while, in two columns, the main body turning the right of the British, should attack the rear. The operations began before day-light; fortunately, one of the enemy's columns mistaking its way in the darkness, was entangled in a swamp adjoining the fortress, and exposed to the fire of the British batteries. Morning having discovered this division not yet extricated from the morass, the British commenced immediately so hot a fire, as not only to prevent the enemy from turning the rear, but even from forming, and destroyed numbers of their men. Meanwhile D'Estaing himself, with the other column, advanced against a redoubt which served as an outwork for the garrison; the combat became extremely fierce and desperate; for a few minutes a French and American standard was planted on a parapet. The contest for the possession of the redoubt was long maintained by both sides; when lieutenant-colonel Maitland, seizing the critical moment, ordered the grenadiers of the sixtieth regiment, with the marines, to move forward and

* He had broken his parole in a former war.

charge

charge the enemy's column, already staggering, under the obstinate resistance at the redoubt, and the slaughter which had been made by the artillery from the different batteries, as well as from the *Germaine* armed brig. This well-timed movement decided the fate of the attack: the assailants were repulsed, driven out of the ditch of the redoubt, and routed with redoubled slaughter, leaving behind them, in killed and wounded, six hundred and thirty-seven of the French troops, and two hundred and sixty-four of the Americans. The issue of this battle determined the siege; the allies separated; the Americans retreated to South Carolina, and the French returned to their ships. Soon after their embarkation, their fleet was dispersed by a storm; D'Estaing, with part of the ships, sailed for France, and the rest returned to the West Indies.

The siege is raised.

In the northern provinces, the war this year was carried on in partial and detached expeditions, but productive of no important event. Sir George Collier, who succeeded admiral Gambier in the command of the fleet, had been employed on the coast of Nova Scotia; there, by his activity, enterprise, and vigilance, he had destroyed numbers of American privateers, which harassed the coasting trade of the colonists, and protected the British commerce to Canada and Nova Scotia, and the Newfoundland fisheries. For his services in the station being promoted to an higher employment, he repaired to New York; there Sir Henry Clinton and he concerted an expedition to Virginia, not with any hopes of making a permanent impression on

Clinton continues a war of detachments.

that central and valuable province, but with a view to impair resources from which the enemy were principally supplied. By the exports of tobacco from the Chesapeake, the credit of congress with foreign nations was chiefly, if not wholly supported; and, by the inland navigation of that bay, large quantities of salt provisions, the produce both of Virginia and North Carolina, were conveyed to the middle colonies for the subsistence of the American army. A detachment under general Matthew, consisting of eighteen hundred men, accompanied by sir George Collier with a ship of the line and four sloops of war, made a descent upon Virginia, burnt the town of Suffolk, took or destroyed an immense quantity of provisions and stores at Gosport and other parts on the coast at Portsmouth, and a great number of merchant ships belonging either to the Americans or their new allies, amounting in all to one hundred and thirty-seven. Having thus annoyed our enemies, and acquired a considerable booty, the armament returned to New York *. General Clinton attacked Verplank's Creek and Stoney Point, two important posts on the Hudson river, commanding the passage at King's Ferry, which was the most direct and convenient course of communication between the northern and middle colonies. On the approach of the British troops, the forts were abandoned: Major-general Tryon and sir George Collier under-

* Mr. Belsham, in his narrative, disapproves of these expeditions as inconsistent with humanity; as if it were contrary to humanity to impair in an enemy the means of doing us hurt!

took an expedition against Connecticut, which, abounding in men and provisions, was a great support to the American army: they successively reduced the several towns, took or destroyed the provisions, ammunition, stores, artillery, and ships, but respected private property as much as possible, and treated the provincials with meritorious lenity *. General Tryon and admiral Collier now proceeded to relieve Penobscot, wherein general Maclean, with a detachment of about six hundred and fifty British, had established a post, in order to check the incursions of the provincials to Nova Scotia. The Americans attempted to surprise this fort, but finding the British prepared for their reception, made dispositions for a regular siege. On the 12th of August, Maclean learned that the next day an assault was intended. On the 13th, however, no attack was made. On the 14th, the garrison early in the morning discovered, to their great surprise, that the enemy had evacuated their works, and in the course of the day found the reason of their departure, in the approach of Collier's squadron. The American ships were taken or burnt; the soldiers and sailors endeavoured to save themselves by flight, but many of them died of fatigue. Collier, on returning to New York, was superseded by admiral Arbuthnot, and soon after embarked for England. The Americans surprised Stoney Point some weeks after its capture, and having taken the fortress by surprise, behaved with the most laudable humanity to the prisoners; but on

* Stedman, vol. ii. p. 143.

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the approach of a British detachment, again evacuated the garrison. They also made an attempt on Palreshook, a British post on the Jersey shore, opposite to New York: Lee, an American major, had learned that a party from the garrison had gone up the country to forage. Advancing at night with three hundred men to the gate, he was mistaken by the centinel for the officer who commanded the foraging party, and being by that means suffered to pass with his detachment, seized two redoubts. Major Sutherland, commander of the post, being alarmed, called together sixty Hessians, whose vigorous onset compelled the provincials to retire, with about forty prisoners: their retreat was by military men reckoned extremely precipitate.

Gallant exploits of the British troops, without any important result.

General Clinton, informed of the arrival of D'Estaing in Georgia, and apprehending a descent upon New York, withdrew his troops from Rhode Island and other detached posts; and concentrating his forces, acted on the defensive for the rest of the campaign. Such, in this campaign, were the exploits of Clinton's forces, whose efforts and achievements bore fresh testimony to British valour, but produced no important results. Through all our exertions, no progress was made towards the attainment of the object.

A war of devastation was carried on between the Americans and Indians; in which, though the former were most frequently superior, they by no means subjugated their enemies.

The Spaniards this year conquered West Florida, and entirely expelled the British from the Mississippi trade.

trade. To compensate this loss, commodore Lut-
terel and captain Dalrymple captured Fort Omoa,
wherein they found two register ships, estimated at
640,000 l. with about a fifth more in other plunder.
France made a successful expedition to the coast of
Africa, with a strong squadron destined afterwards
to reinforce D'Estaing in the West Indies. The British
forts, settlements, and factories at Senegal, on the
Gambia, and other parts of the coast, being totally
incapable of resisting, each were successively taken.

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From distant regions we now return to Europe, wherein the combined force of the house of Bourbon was exerted to overpower Great Britain on her own element, but was exerted in vain.

Europe.

Unwise as Spain manifested herself, in seeking a contest with England, she had dexterously timed her avowal of hostile intentions: she had suspended her declaration until the arrival of her annual treasures from her dominions in America, and until she was able to join the French fleet in Europe. On the 12th of June, the armament of France sailed from Brest towards the coast of Spain; on the 16th, the Spanish minister had, as we have seen, delivered the manifesto; and, on the 24th of the same month, the Spanish fleet joined the French.

The situation of England at this time appeared peculiarly perilous. She had formerly coped with the house of Bourbon, but had not been obliged to encounter its undivided strength. Her continental allies, by employing a considerable part of the land efforts of our enemies, had prevented their principal exertions from being directed to maritime operations. It had been often objected

Perilous
situation of
Britain.

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to her statesmen, that they too ambitiously courted foreign confederacies; her ministers were now censured for their total avoidance of continental connections. She had now to stand alone against the Bourbon force, joined to her own revolted subjects; and while a great part of her power was employed against her ancient colonies, a naval armament, in multitude of men, number, and size of ships, unprecedented in maritime history, prepared to bear down upon the remainder. Foreign nations, seeing her in such circumstances, considered her ruin as fast approaching; but the event soon shewed, that however unwise it may be in Britain entirely to renounce alliances with European neighbours, yet in herself, in the resources of her own industry, ability, and spirit, she possesses the means of repelling every attempt of her enemies: gigantic as were the efforts, they did not avail.

Before the commencement of the chief naval operations, a squadron of French made an attempt upon the island of Jersey. This attack, though easily repulsed, produced important consequences. Admiral Arbuthnot, on the 2d of May, was proceeding down the Channel with a reinforcement of troops, and a large supply of provisions and stores, to join sir Henry Clinton, when he received intelligence that the French were in Jersey; and, leaving his convoy at Torbay, he with his squadron hastened to the relief of the island. This laudable movement, though executed as rapidly as possible, besides being the cause of considerable delay in his own voyage, interfered with our plan for the naval campaign in Europe. It being apprehended, that
as

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as the season was advancing, the Brest fleet might be out, and attempt to intercept so valuable a convoy, ten ships of the line, under admiral Darby, were dispatched from the Channel fleet to conduct Arbuthnot beyond all probable danger. Our principal armament, which had been intended to block up the French in Brest harbour, to prevent its junction with the Spaniards, was deemed inadequate to the service, until it should be rejoined by Darby. During this interval, the two fleets of our enemies were enabled to meet: when united, they amounted to more than sixty ships of the line, with nearly an equal number of frigates; and, soon after their junction, this formidable armada steered towards the British coasts. Sir Charles Hardy, with thirty-eight sail of the line and a smaller proportion of frigates, was cruising in the chops of the Channel, when the combined fleet passed him considerably to the eastward, about the middle of August, and proceeded as far as Plymouth. The enemy in their way took the Ardent, a ship of the line that was failing to join the British admiral. They made no attempt to land, but continued in sight of Plymouth several days. After having paraded there to the great alarm of the people, a strong easterly gale drove them out to the ocean; they ranged about the land's end, Scilly islands, and adjacent parts, till the end of the month. On the 31st of August, sir Charles Hardy entered the Channel in sight of the combined fleet, which made no attempt to oppose his passage. The British admiral, like his renowned predecessor Drake in similar circumstances, endeavoured to entice the enemy into the

The combined fleets parade in the Channel.

The English fleet endeavoured to draw this armada to the narrow seas.

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The enemy
retreat.France
threatens an
invasion.Loyal and
patriotic
spirit and
efforts of all
parties to
resist the
enemy.Voluntary
contribu-
tions.

narrow seas, where they could not have sufficiently expanded their force; but perhaps dreading the fate of the former armada, when it presumed to brave England on her own element, they retired. The enemy accompanied this ostentatious exhibition of their fleet, with threats of an invasion by a powerful army. The northern provinces of France were every where in motion; forces were marched down to the coasts of Normandy and Brittany; the ports in the Bay and in the Channel were crowded with shipping; and the general and principal officers were named by the king to command and act in a grand intended expedition. The British government, with suitable vigilance and activity, prepared to defeat the expected attack. Numerous cruizers were stationed in the Channel, to watch the enemy's motions; the militia were embodied; they and the regular troops marched to our southern coasts, and cattle, horses, and whatever else could be conveniently moved, were, by a proclamation, driven into the interior country. The prospect of such danger roused the national spirit; party disputes were by the bulk of the people for a time forgotten; they no longer enquired whether North or Fox would make the ablest minister, but agreed in thinking that Britain, an independent and free state, was happier, than she could be as the dependent province of an arbitrary monarchy. These thoughts, and the consequent sentiments, animated every loyal and patriotic heart. Public bodies and private individuals made voluntary contributions to raise men for the defence of their king and country. But our exertions were not confined to defence: while this

this mighty armament hovered over our coasts, a squadron of ships, under commodore Johnstone, alarmed the opposite shores of France; our cruizers and privateers annoyed the trade of our enemies; our own rich mercantile fleets from the East and West Indies came safe into harbour, while the Bourbon armament was at sea. The combined host returned to Brest harbour, where the bad state of their ships, and sickness of their crews, confined them to port for the rest of the campaign. Thus the approach of this immense equipment, and the threatened invasion, proved mere empty bravadoes. Sir Charles Hardy continued till the beginning of November to cruize with his fleet. In spite of her combined enemies, Britannia still ruled the waves. The only commercial fleet that was in any danger, owed its peril to a private adventurer. Paul Jones, in the end of July, sailed with a squadron, consisting of a forty gun ship, a frigate of thirty-six and another of thirty-two guns, a brig of twelve guns, and a cutter, from port L'Orient, to intercept our homeward-bound fleet from the Baltic. These merchantmen were under the convoy of the Serapis, of forty-four guns, captain Pierfon, and the Countess of Scarborough of twenty guns, captain Percy. On the 23d of September, captain Pierfon having discovered the enemy off Scarborough, made signal to the convoy to run ashore as soon as possible; and when near enough to perceive the superior force of the enemy, summoned the other frigate to his side. Jones, trusting to the numbers of his men and guns, offered battle; being within musket shot, he attacked the Serapis, and attempted to board her, but

The British
fleet keeps
the sea, and
protects our
trade.

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but was repulsed. Captain Pierfon, after gallantly maintaining the contest for a long time against the two largest ships of the enemy, at length seeing no hopes of success, in mercy to his men struck his colours. Percy, with his twenty gun ship, made a no less valiant defence against Jones's frigate of thirty-two, but was compelled to strike. The loss of the British in killed and wounded was great; but that of the enemy much greater. Jones's own ship was so greatly damaged, that she sunk two days afterwards. In this engagement, two of the king's ships were lost; but their resistance saved the whole convoy, which escaped into different harbours.

Investment
of Gibraltar.

One of the principal objects of Spain was Gibraltar; accordingly preparations were early made for proceeding against that fortress. Aware of the natural strength of the place, of the number and valour of its defenders, lately reinforced with troops, and supplied with ammunition and stores, the Spaniards saw that a siege would be impracticable, and that the only means of reduction was blockade: they therefore, in July, invested it by sea and land, but made no impression during the first campaign.

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Character of a statesman.—General view of lord North's administration.—Arduous struggle in which Britain was engaged.—Her resources grow from her calls.—Her efforts rise with her difficulties.—Meeting of parliament.—The king's speech.—Extraordinary amendment proposed to the address.—Views of opposition.—Plan of systematic attack on ministers, under three general heads—to be respectively carried on under the conduct of Messrs. Burke, Fox, and Dunning.—State of Ireland.—Alarming associations.—Lord North's plan for affording them satisfaction.—Bills passed for that purpose.—Motions in the house of peers by the duke of Richmond and earl Shelburne respecting the profusion of public money.—Petitions by Yorkshire and London.—Mr. Burke undertakes the cause of public economy.—Celebrated bill of reform.—Motions respecting the increasing influence of the crown.—Increasing spirit of popular association.—Incident which damped that spirit.—Protestant society—extends from Scotland to England.—Lord George Gordon becomes an enthusiast against popery—president of the protestant society.—Petition to parliament for a repeal of the tolerant law—supported by an immense multitude that surround the parliament-house.—Firm and manly conduct of the legislature.—Dreadful riots in London—numerous conflagrations—tremendous aspect of the burning metropolis—prisons broken open—bank threatened—attempt to cut the pipes of the New River—military reinforcements arrive—at length prove victorious—insurrection crushed—tranquillity restored—loud complaints against the Lord Mayor.—Parliament resumes its functions.—Supplies.—Session rises.—Parliament dissolved.

AMONG the various considerations that enter into our estimates of the conduct and character of statesmen, there are two to which we may safely resort as just tests of executorial ability: the first

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Character
of a states-
man.

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first is general and comprehensive, and depends on the principles which direct their thoughts and actions; the second is particular, and modified by the existing case. The former of these tests consists in the nature and tendency of the objects pursued, and means employed in the whole system of their policy, according to the fitness of which we are enabled to characterise their administration as a series; the latter, in the nature and tendency of specific ends and measures, which relate merely to the circumstances of the time: according to the choice and adaptation of these, we appretiate any given part of an administration. It would be erroneous and feeble reasoning, to infer, from the want of one species of talent, the absence of every other. There have been ministers, to whose proceedings we could not apply the first of these standards, as they were evidently guided by no fixed principles of political science, and directed to no determinate objects of pursuit, or concerted plan of conduct, whose actions have been isolated experiments for extrication from special difficulties, and not the result of any systematic policy for general security against evil, or for the advancement of good. Though such men could not be consummate statesmen, yet might they exert, in the invention of expedients, very considerable ingenuity. In reviewing the policy of the successive counsellors concerned in our disputes with America, and considering the value of the objects, and the efficacy of the means, an attempt to discover grand, comprehensive, and beneficially practicable principles and schemes would be vain. Ministers had reasoned
and

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General
view of lord
North's ad-
ministration.

and acted as political empirics, and had even evinced themselves deficient in the limited experience to which an empiric trusts. Their proceedings not only proved them devoid of political wisdom, but of common information; on very obvious cases, which it behoved them to have thoroughly investigated. It is easy to see that combined wisdom and magnanimity might have avoided the American war; by abstaining from imposts less productive, than advantages which were enjoyed before their enactment; by concession, when more profitable than coercion; by voluntary grants, more glorious than attempts to exact; or if conciliatory offers of renewed intercourse availed nothing, by rather totally abandoning the object, than persisting in it through means to which the value of the end was so little proportionate. By not preventing the American contest, the British government afforded an opportunity for the Bourbon ambition to bring on the French and Spanish wars; and thus far a retrospect of ministerial conduct justified a conclusion, that their policy was, in its nature, feeble, inconsistent, and unwise, and in its effect, prejudicial to the country; but when we trace their counsels and measures after we were actually involved in those evils, we find that it frequently possessed the secondary merit of lessening the evils which had been produced by themselves. In the late campaign, the most threatening which Britain had ever experienced, the preparations of ministers had warded off the dangers: the resistance of Great Britain to a mighty combination, filled European spectators with astonishment and respect;
her

Arduous
struggle in
which Bri-
tain was
engaged.

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Her resources
grow from
her calls,
and her
efforts rise
with her
difficulties.

her resources seemed to grow with her necessities, and in no part of the world was her naval or military glory obscured. If many considered ministers as the ultimate authors of our miseries, yet not a few of these admitted their recent exertions for defending the country to have been powerful; and, in viewing our actual situation, great numbers either overlooked or forgot the cause. Resentment and indignation against our enemies, absorbed all thoughts of the impolicy which had enabled their malignity to operate. Patriotism called aloud, Let us punish our foes, and defend ourselves; and prudence said, Reflections on the causes of our state are now too late, our first care ought to be, to discover the means of extrication from our difficulties. Such were the sentiments which prevailed in Britain; and if they implied no strong approbation of ministers, they contained at least little new reprehension. During the recess of parliament, some partial changes took place in the ministry: the earl of Gower, lord president of the council, resigned that high office, and was succeeded by the earl of Bathurst; the earl of Hillsborough was appointed secretary of state for the southern department, in the room of lord Weymouth; lord Stormont for the northern, lately occupied by lord Suffolk: but the three chief ministers who presided over the treasury, American and naval affairs, continued to hold their offices.

Meeting of
parliament.

Parliament met on the 25th of November. The speech from the throne observed, that we were called upon by every principle of duty, and every consideration of interest, to exert our united efforts in the support and defence of our country, attacked by

by an unjust and unprovoked war, and contending with one of the most dangerous confederacies that ever was formed against the crown and people of Great Britain. Here our king presented a description of his subjects, which was applicable to loyal, patriotic, and magnanimous Britons, then, and in all ages. "I know the character of my brave people; the menaces of their enemies, and the approach of danger, have no other effect on their minds, but to animate their courage, and to call forth that national spirit, which has so often checked and defeated the projects of ambition and injustice, and enabled the British fleets and armies to protect their country, to vindicate their rights, and at the same time to uphold and preserve the liberties of Europe." In exhorting his parliament to persevere in such efforts as would maintain the defence and security, and promote the common strength, wealth, and interest of all his dominions, he particularly recommended to their deliberations the state of Ireland.

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The King's
speech.

An amendment of a very extraordinary nature was moved to the address; its purport was, to contrast the situation of this country when his majesty ascended the throne, with its present state when the twentieth year of his reign had commenced; and in a very copious and minute detail, which included the principal events of the reign, it professed to exhibit the outset, progress, and result, and represented our condition as then prosperous, but now adverse; the prospect as then splendid, but now gloomy: imputing the alleged alteration to a change in the plans of government, it proposed to leave the new, and return to the old system. Pre-

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nary
amendment
proposed to
the address.

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Views of
opposition.Plan of systematic
attack on ministers,under three
general
heads.

presenting to the sovereign a dismal picture of his dominions, it declared that, in the opinion of its proposers, parliament would betray both their king and country, if they did not distinctly state to his majesty, that nothing but new counsels and new counsellors could prevent the consummation of public ruin. In this projected remonstrance, the members of opposition departed from the tone which they had usually assumed, and demonstrated that they had now framed a much more general plan of operations, than in any of their former hostilities against ministers. They perceived that the public, in contemplating existing situations, began to forget the series of past events; and to recal these to the minds of the people, seems to have been the chief object of the proposition which they now offered to parliament. Never was more ability displayed by any parliamentary opposition, than in the plan of the minority this session; or more judgment, than in distributing the parts of the execution according to the talents of the principal leaders. They undertook to prove, first in general principle, and afterwards in detail, that the system of government was radically and completely wrong, and that a total change was necessary for the salvation of the country. The changes were proposed to take place in three different departments, oeconomic, constitutional, and executorial. The expanded and philosophical mind of Burke was employed in grand schemes of political oecconomy, so much the subject of analysis and deduction, since the publication of Smith's profound work; and of practical comparison, from the exertions of Neckar in the neighbouring kingdom.

kingdom. The preservation of the constitution, and the correction of alleged abuses in that admirable system, was the province assigned to him, whose vigorous and acute mind, enriched with legal knowledge, sharpened by forensic contention, and enlarged by senatorial deliberation, had chosen for its principal object the support of constitutional law and practice: to watch the balance of the orders, to correct the preponderancy in either scale, was the task assigned to Mr. Dunning: while the powerful and comprehensive genius, the penetrating sagacity, the bold and intrepid spirit, the luminous, forcible and impressive eloquence of Mr. Fox, were employed on the executorial conduct of ministers. The efforts, therefore, of opposition, besides various and separate objects of attack, were this session principally directed to political œconomy, the balance of the constitution, and the conduct of administration, under three distinguished leaders respectively, Messrs. Burke, Dunning, and Fox. The speeches in support of the amendment, contained outlines of proceedings, which occupied them during the session. After exhibiting the present reign in an historical series to the commencement of the preceding campaign, they went over the various operations, and endeavoured to demonstrate, that, in the whole and every part of their conduct, ministers had shewn themselves totally unfit for their offices. This preliminary debate equalled the highest oratorial efforts which had ever been employed in the British senate; but its result was unfavourable to the ablest speakers; opposition were outvoted by a

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to be respectively carried on under the conduct of Messrs. Burke, Dunning, and Fox.

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State of
Ireland.

majority of two hundred and thirty-three to one hundred and thirty-four in the house of commons, and eighty to forty-one in the house of lords.

After the preliminary contention, the first object of opposition was the state of Ireland. It was understood, that during the recess a plan was to have been formed for giving our fellow-subjects such satisfaction as might equally conduce to the welfare of the sister-kingdom and Britain. Members of opposition now censured ministers for not having taken effectual steps to satisfy the Irish nation. They drew a melancholy picture of the condition of Ireland, before its first application to the British parliament in 1778: they described the sentiments disappointment had excited in that kingdom, and the subsequent proceedings which had resulted from calamity and discontent. Separated from the exaggerations of orators, the following was the actual state of affairs: associations against the purchase and use of British manufactures, and for the encouragement, in every possible degree, of their own, had already taken place. At first these had only been partial, but now they were become universal, and the non-importation and non-consumption agreements included the usual penalties or denunciations of vengeance, not only against violators, but against those importers or sellers of the prohibited commodities who had not acceded to the general compact: to these had been joined associations of a very different nature, and to the apprehensions already described had been lately added the imminent danger of foreign invasion; a measure which was evidently intended,

Alarming
associations.

intended, if not absolutely avowed, by France ; and this situation was the more alarming, as the military force supported by Ireland had been continually drained off and weakened by the American war. In order to provide for their defence, they said it must be placed in those who were the most deeply interested in its success. The state was unable, or unwilling, to defend them effectually; and the mode of defence, which was unequal to their protection, might be ruinous to their liberties. Military societies were renewed, and their spirit became universal. They declared that they were designed for the double purpose, of defending their safety against foreign enemies, and their rights against domestic injustice. They affirmed that they were loyal to the king, and affectionate to Britain; but that it was with the loyalty and affection consistent with their own liberty and prosperity. In every part of the kingdom were seen to arise, as it were by magic, vast bodies of citizens serving at their own charges, choosing their own officers, who had been trained to great expertness, and obeying with exemplary regularity and steadiness. No nobleman or gentleman could shew his face in the country, who did not fall in (which they did generally, and for the most part cheerfully) with the prevalent disposition of the inferior and middling classes of their countrymen. After having provided for their defence against foreign enemies *, the Irish began to look towards their rights, or claims of rights, and in general declared the authority of the British parlia-

* See Annual Register, 1780.

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ment over them to be a flagrant usurpation. This state of things was not the work of a party, or of any particular set of men, but was produced and upheld by every rank, class, and denomination of people. A free and unlimited commerce with the whole world, was the first, the great, and general object of redress, for which no compensation could be admitted, and without which no other concessions or advantages, however great and beneficial, could afford satisfaction. This was the *sine qua non*, from which there was no departure. Such was the state of affairs in Ireland; and during the recess of the British parliament, the Irish lawgivers shewed themselves inspired with the spirit of the nation. They declared in their addresses to the throne, that nothing less than a free and unlimited trade could save the country from ruin. From these facts, opposition in both houses endeavoured to prove, that the deplorable and alarming condition of Ireland arose from the misconduct of ministers, in not having adopted measures for its relief; and made motions, charging them with criminal negligence respecting the sister-kingdom. This accusation was powerfully supported by lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox in their respective houses; ministers, without attempting to refute the statements, made a very able defence of their own conduct. They strongly contended, that the condition of Ireland was owing to causes over which they had no control. In this part of the defence, the forcible and well-directed understanding of Mr. Dundas was employed in vindicating administration; and exhibited a clear and masterly view of the

the defective system of our commercial policy respecting Ireland, in which her miseries originated many years before the appointment of the present ministers, and before the present reign. The restrictions imposed in the general system of our trade-laws were conceived in prejudice, and founded in ignorance and impolicy ; but the prejudices were so strengthened by time, and confirmed by the habits of a century, that they appeared at length to have become a part of our very constitution, which affected members of parliament as well as all ranks of the people ; and thence the attempt made in the two preceding sessions to obtain only a moderate relaxation, met with the most determined opposition. The few who undertook the invidious task, finding themselves obliged to encounter prejudice without, as well as petitions and pleadings at the bar, were at length overborne by numbers. Distresses, which arose from the frame of our commercial policy, and the errors of public opinion, it was illiberal and unjust to impute to the servants of the executive government. From the charge of negligence, in not having formed a plan of relief during the recess, Lord North himself undertook the defence of ministry. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of other affairs in which they were occupied, they had actually bestowed much time and attention in collecting information, and forming a plan for the relief of Ireland ; in a week, however, he should be ready to bring forward propositions for that purpose. Accordingly, on the 13th of December, he opened his scheme, and proposed ; first, to repeal the laws which

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prohibited

Lord
North's plan
for granting
them satis-
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prohibited the exportation of Irish woollen manufactures from Ireland to any part of Europe: secondly, that so much of the act of the 19th George II. as prohibits the importation of glass into Ireland, except of British manufacture, or to export glass from that kingdom, should be repealed: and, thirdly, that Ireland should be suffered to carry on a trade of export and import to and from the British colonies in America and the West Indies, and her settlements on the coast of Africa, subject to such limitations, regulations, restrictions, and duties, as the parliament of Ireland should impose. The system of the minister was received with great satisfaction, and even applause, by opposition.

Bills passed
for that pur-
pose.

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His introductory speech, with very great ability, accurate and extensive knowledge, exhibited a view of the state of Ireland and its causes, the necessity of amending its condition, and the principles which he proposed to apply as most conducive to the purpose. Bills founded on the two first propositions were accordingly introduced, passed both houses without any contest, and received the royal assent before the recess. The third, more complex in its nature, and requiring a great variety of investigation, was postponed till after the holidays; not only that time might be afforded for discussion, but that it might be known how the new measures affected the Irish. It passed in the month of February, 1780. These acts, imparting in so great a degree the benefit of a free trade, were received with rapturous gratitude by the warm hearts of the generous Irish. Instead of being dictated by colleagues of more imperious dispositions

dispositions and narrower capacities, this wise and liberal plan resulted from lord North's own heart and understanding; and, by restoring harmony in disputes between branches of the same community, demonstrated that conciliation is much sounder policy than coercion.

Among the various subjects of animadversion on the conduct of ministry, the waste of public money this session occupied more than even its usual attention. Provision for the national service originates in the representatives of the people; an inquiry, however, into the application of the sums that have been voted, is certainly not foreign to the lords, who are a branch of the legislature; and consist of so great proprietors, proportionably affected by increase of impost: accordingly, peers in opposition took a very active share in endeavouring to scrutinize expenditure, and lessen profusion. The duke of Richmond and lord Shelburne charged ministers with the greatest prodigality, and respectively made motions of inquiry, intended to be prefatory to others which should embrace the whole circle of expenditure. The duke of Richmond laid down, as the basis of the proposed scrutiny, a few strong and comprehensive propositions: that by the infatuation of government, we were engaged in wars which necessarily demanded immense sums of money; that ministers ought, by the most rigid possible œconomy, to moderate enormous evils of their own creation; so far were they from exercising the frugality incumbent on all managers of the public money, but more especially on those to whose folly and misconduct the cost was owing, that unbounded prodigality

Motions in the house of peers by the duke of Richmond and earl Shelburne respecting the profusion of public money.

prodigality was evident in the civil list, the army, the navy, and the ordnance, the four great sources of national expence; the people groaned under the burdens imposed on them for a supply to ministerial profusion: our chief rival was, under her skilful and upright financier, contracting her expenditure, while we, under our incapable and corrupt stewards, were increasing ours beyond all precedents of history, and all possibility of longer endurance*. From these grounds inferring that either œconomy or ruin was the alternative, he proposed to commence the reform with the reduction of the civil list, and moved an address to his majesty, praying him to set the example; representing, that from relieving the miseries of a distressed people, his crown would derive a lustre superior to any which could arise from external splendor; and that even after the requested curtailment, sufficient means would be left for every rational and beneficial purpose of regal magnificence. Ministerial peers admitted that there had been *some* want of frugality during the present administration; but whatever system of œconomy might be adopted, it should not begin with the crown, the splendor of which should be maintained, as including all the dignity and honour of the empire. It would be inconsistent and unjust in parliament to withdraw from the king that which had been unanimously granted. Lord Thurlow, with his masculine force of understanding, and acuteness of professional habits, encountered the motion more

* See Parliamentary Debates for 1780, duke of Richmond's motion for œconomical reform.

closely than any of the other peers. The proposition was founded on the alleged distresses of the people; the fact had not been established, it rested merely on his grace's assertion; if the miseries did exist, and did arise from public prodigality, the department in which it prevailed ought to be specified, and the alleged extravagance proved, that the remedy might be applied to the actual evil: were the cure to be an application of the civil list, the motion proposing merely a reduction, without specifying its extent, was vague and nugatory; it was impossible to understand its exact import; the house could not vote for an indefinite requisition. These arguments prevailed, and the motion was rejected by a majority of seventy-seven to thirty-six. Proceeding on the same general principle, the earl of Shelburne proposed to inquire into the extraordinaries of the army; he took an historical view of the sums expended under that head, of the armies supported, victories and advantages obtained, from the beginning of king William's war to the peace of Paris, and demonstrated that the sums charged in the accounts of 1779, were one million more upon that article than in any year of our former wars. After a detail illustrating ministerial prodigality, he moved a resolution, that the alarming addition annually made under the head of extraordinaries, required immediate check and control; but the motion was negatived by a considerable majority.

The issue of these propositions for reducing the national expenditure, caused very great discontents in various parts of England. The enormous expence of our establishments, from the war, and from

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from York-
shire and
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from waste, began to be severely felt in the nation, and awakened the attention of the metropolis, and the different counties. Yorkshire and London, the chief districts of landed and monied property, took the lead in expressing alarm, petitioned parliament, and were followed by other corporations. The petition of the county of York, comprehensive in its object, explicit in its avowals, strong though temperate in its language, constitutional in its principles, exact and circumstantial in its detail, was the model on which other applications were formed. The nation, it set forth, had for several years been engaged in a very expensive and unfortunate war. Many of our valuable colonies had declared themselves independent, and formed a strict confederacy with our most inveterate enemies; the consequence of these combined misfortunes was a large addition to the national debt, a heavy accumulation of taxes, with a rapid decline of the trade, manufactures, and land-rents of the kingdom. Alarmed at the diminished resources and growing burdens of the country, and convinced that rigid frugality was now necessary for the salvation of the state, they observed with grief, that many individuals enjoyed sinecure places with exorbitant emoluments, and pensions unmerited by public service. They conceived the true end of every legitimate government to be the welfare of the community, and that the British constitution, which seeks the public good, peculiarly entrusts the national purse to the house of commons; and represented, that until effectual measures were taken to redress these grievances, by suppressing useless donatives,

donatives, and preventing unnecessary and extravagant largesses, the grant of any additional sum of money, beyond the produce of the present taxes, would be injurious to the rights and property of the people, and derogatory from the honour and dignity of parliament. This petition was introduced by sir George Saville, the disinterested and patriotic member of that great, industrious, and opulent county. With much good sense, plain and perspicuous reasoning, he supported the representation, and urged the necessity of giving it a favourable attention. Ministers did not object to the propriety of receiving this address; but, by postponing the consideration of its complaints, they eventually defeated its purpose.

These discussions concerning public expenditure were preludes to the celebrated plan of œconomical reform which was introduced this session by Mr. Edmund Burke. Before the recess, this philosophical orator delivered a speech, in which he exhibited the action and re-action of public profusion and corrupt influence; reviewed the present expences and general establishments; stated principles, and expounded details, in order to ascertain utility. He intimated, that soon after the holidays, he would bring forward a plan for the reduction of public expenditure. Able men of all parties, knowing the immense grasp of the author's capacity, the extent and compass of his legislative views, the fullness and accuracy of his knowledge, the variety and novelty of his illustrations, waited with anxious expectation for the performance of his promise; ministers and their friends,

Mr. Burke undertakes the cause of public œconomy.

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friends, anticipated statements and arguments which they would not receive with conviction, at least with pleasure and approbation; nevertheless, they assured themselves of philosophy, eloquence, and poetic imagery, which would fill them with delight and astonishment. The 11th of February 1780, Mr. Burke presented his plan, comprehending two objects, the reduction of expence, and the better security of the independence of parliament. His introduction stated the difficulties which he must encounter in conducting a plan of reform lessening private emolument; by which it was proposed to sacrifice individual gain from donative, to general good in the retrenchment of unnecessary cost. In such a case, private feeling was to be overborne by legislative reason; a man of long-sighted and strong-nerved humanity would consider, not so much from whom he took a superfluous enjoyment, as for whom he might preserve the absolute necessities of life. He laid down the following general principles, as the basis on which he was determined to raise his superstructure of reform: that all establishments, which furnish more matter of expence, more temptation to oppression, or more means and instruments of corrupt influence, than advantage to justice or political administration, ought to be abolished: these rules he applied to certain institutions, public estates, offices, and modes of disbursement, and proved, by accurate documents and conclusive arguments, that the inferior jurisdictions answered no purpose, which might

might not be better effected by the supreme character of the sovereign. He proposed, therefore, that the principality of Wales, the county palatine of Chester, the duchy and county palatine of Lancaster, and the duchy of Cornwall, should be united to the crown; and that offices now annexed to these separate jurisdictions, being sources of useless expence, and means of corrupt influence, should be abolished. His chief attention was bestowed on the household: he proposed to abolish the offices of treasurer, comptroller, cofferer, and master of the household; the wardrobe and jewel-offices, the board of works, and a great part of the civil branch of the board of ordnance; subordinate treasuries, the pay-offices of the army and navy, and the office of the pay-master of the pensions. These payments, he designed in future to be made by the exchequer, and the great patent officers of the exchequer reduced to fixed salaries, as the present lives and the reversions should successively fall. A great number of inferior places, too inconsiderable for historical particularization, were also to be abolished by the plan of Mr. Burke. He proposed to suppress the new office of third secretary of state, as totally unnecessary; also to limit pensions to sixty thousand pounds a year, but without interfering with present holders; and concluded his plan of reduction, by recommending the entire annihilation of the board of trade, as an office totally useless, answering none of its avowed purposes, merely providing eight members for parliament, and thereby retaining their services. To his scheme
of

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of reform, he subjoined a system of arrangement, which he conceived would effectually prevent all future prodigality of the civil list. In order to facilitate this regulation, he proposed to establish a fixed and invariable order in payments, to divide liquidations into nine classes *, ranked respectively according to the importance and justice of the demand, or to the inability of the persons entitled to enforce their pretensions. Such are the outlines of Mr. Burke's scheme for œconomical reform, wherein an impartial examiner must admit the justness and comprehensiveness of the general principles of political œconomy, also the accuracy of his details of office, and acknowledge that considerable saving would accrue to the nation from the adoption of the plan. The utility of œconomy, however, would have been much greater to infinitely more momentous departments of public expence, than any within the civil list—to the ordnance, the navy, and the army. It is probable, that if Mr. Burke had succeeded in his first project of reform, he afterwards would have carried his efforts to the largest sources of expence: all parties joined in bestowing the highest applause on the depth of his financial philosophy, and the profound

* 1st, the judges; 2dly, ambassadors; 3dly, tradesmen to the crown; 4thly, domestic servants, and all persons with salaries not above two hundred a year; 5thly, pensioners from the privy purse; 6thly, holders of salaries above two hundred a year; 7thly, the whole pension list; 8thly, holders of offices of honour about the king; 9thly, the lords of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer.

research

research and acute discrimination which appeared in every part of his scheme ; but, when the principles came to be applied to the particular plans of reform, ministers did not accede. Burke grounded upon his system five bills, which, after much discussion, were at length severally rejected.

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While Mr. Burke was engaged in recommending public œconomy, Mr. Dunning was actively employed in attempting to remedy an evil which he deduced from public profusion. Petitions, both numerous and strong, were presented, deprecating the prevalent abuses, and especially the waste of public money. The principle* of the several applications was the same ; that the national revenue ought to be solely employed for promoting the national benefit ; that every shilling which was otherwise expended, was injustice to the people ; and that a great portion of the prodigality was occupied in extending the authority of the crown and propping the power of ministers, which they never could support by wisdom and virtue. On the 6th of April the petitions were discussed, and a memorable debate ensued, in which Mr. Dunning took the lead in favour of the applicants : he exhibited, in a connected series, the history and philosophy of constitutional law ; the measures and causes which endangered our rights and liberties in former times ; presented a glowing picture of the conduct of ministers ; and endeavoured to prove that it had a similar tendency to the counsels which

* See petitions for York, London, Westminster, and other places, in spring 1780.

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Motion re-
specting the
increasing
influence of
the crown.

had produced so much mischief under the house of Stuart. From a very extensive, accurate, and interesting detail, in a series of acute and powerful reasoning, he drew the following conclusion: "that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;" and proposed this allegation as a resolution to be voted by the house. Such a proposition summoned the chief ability and eloquence of the house in efforts of either attack or defence. So strongly did Dunning and his co-adjutors impress many of the country gentlemen, that they joined opposition; and to the consternation of ministers, and the surprise of their opponents, the motion was successful. Lord North in a few days recovered his wonted majority; but opposition, elated with their late success, and the circumstances from which it proceeded, trusting they would be ultimately victorious, redoubled their exertions. The petitions were the subject of repeated controversies; in one of which*, Mr. William Adam, a young member of high promise, exhibited a very masterly view of the dangers which accrue from agitating the multitude to an active interference in the government of the country. This gentleman, son of the eldest of the four celebrated brothers, was a native of Scotland, and educated at Edinburgh, at the time that university, headed by Robertson and supported by Blair and Fergusson, was at the zenith of literary glory. From Fergusson his sound and vigorous understanding imbibed the justest principles of ethics and of politics, and was

* On a motion of Mr. Dunning, April 24th, for an address to his majesty, deprecating the sudden dissolution or prorogation of parliament.

taught to cherish and respect mingled liberty and order. His friend and relation, Robertson, instructed him, while he valued the rights of the people, to prize also the constitutional prerogatives of the crown. On the basis of philosophy, he raised the superstructure of history and of law; and so founded and prepared, he procured a seat in parliament. Mr. Adam drew a striking picture of the progress from popular agitation to revolution and anarchy in the days of Charles I., and allowed that the opponents of the court began from justifiable and noble motives; he marked the movements of so formidable an engine as the multitude, and followed its progress, until its rapidity and force, becoming totally ungovernable, crushed the constitution. The genius of Mr. Fox gave a different interpretation to the same period of history, and ascribed the fate of Charles, and the calamities of his country, to the weak obstinacy of the king, who, by refusing, in the early part of his reign, to gratify the reasonable wishes of his people, provoked them to a resistance, which brought destruction on himself. The efforts of opposition, great as they were, did not, in the present session, recover the majority of the 6th of April.

A bill was proposed for excluding contractors from parliament, and by ministers suffered to pass the house of commons with little opposition, probably from either a foreknowledge or predestination of its rejection by the other house. On the general ground of diminishing the influence of the crown, a bill was introduced for preventing revenue-officers from voting at elections, but rejected by a small majority. On the 23d of March, Lord North in-

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formed the commons, that the East India company not having made such proposals for the renewal of their charter as he deemed satisfactory, he should move the house for the speaker to give them the three years notice ordained by act of parliament, previous to the dissolution of their monopoly; that the capital stock or debt of 4,200,000*l.* which the public owed to the company, should be fully paid on the 25th of April 1783, agreeably to the power of redemption included in the same act. Mr. Fox inveighed against this measure of the minister, as tending to deprive us of our India possessions, as he had lost us America. Lord North answered, that he intended nothing more than to prefer a legal claim, in behalf of the public, to the reversion of an undoubted right. The proposed notice did not preclude any propositions which might hereafter be made by the company, and did not restrain parliament from accepting any offers which it approved; it merely intended to prevent a year of the public right to the reversion of the company's trade from slipping away without compensation. The company, as it was now established, was certainly the best medium for drawing home the revenues from the Indies; but if they were either so unreasonable or imprudent as not to offer a fair bargain to the public, a new corporation might be formed, and effectual measures adopted to prevent or remedy the threatened evils. These representations of lord North were so reasonable, that his adversaries suffered him to carry his motion without a division.

On the 5th of May, general Conway proposed a plan of conciliation with America, by
removing

removing all their just complaints, without acknowledging their independence. It was opposed by ministers, as degrading and ineffectual; and was faintly supported by the chief men of opposition, who thought it totally inadequate to its object. Repeated motions were made in both houses, for inquiring into the army extraordinary and different articles of public expenditure; but they were all negatived. Propositions were also offered for the removal of ministers, but met with the same fate. Associations continued to be formed both in London and other parts of England, the object of which was reform of abuses, with a change of measures and of men.

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Increasing
spirit of
association.

While so many, both within and without parliament, displayed enmity to ministers, proceedings took place which damped the spirit of association, suspended all opposition, and produced unanimity in both legislative assemblies, in every enlightened well-wisher to his king and country, to whatever sect or denomination he might belong. Legislature, finding the populace of Scotland so much averse to the relief of the Roman catholics, had not extended their system of tolerance to that country. The successful resistance of the Scottish zealots encouraged fanatics in England to expect that, by efforts equally vigorous, they might procure the repeal, on this side of the Tweed, of the laws which had been prevented on the other. A protestant society was formed in England, consisting of members of nearly the same rank and character which composed the association of Scotland; persons who, though many of them were well-

Incident
which
damped that
spirit.

Extends
from Scot-
land to
England.

Protestant
society.

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Lord George
Gordon be-
comes an
enthusiast
against po-
pery,

meaning friends to the protestant religion, were generally uninformed men, and estimated popery by its former, not its modern state; and who were for applying towards papists that intolerant spirit which constituted one of the worst qualities of popery during the ages of ignorant credulity and clerical usurpation. The members of this protestant club had met, and declaimed, and wrote, and advertised, during the whole winter, but attracted the attention of neither ministers nor opposition. Had these humble associators been left to themselves, their fanaticism might have evaporated in harmless vanity, gratified by the distinction which its lowly votaries acquired from seeing their names in print, as members of committees for watching over the interests of religion; but the interference of a nobleman in their meetings and resolutions, gave a very different determination to their conduct. Lord George Gordon, younger brother of an illustrious family, was a youth of ingenuity and volatile fancy, but little guided by prudence and sound judgment: wild and chimerical in his notions, ungovernable in his passions, and excessive in dissipation, he was peculiarly marked by eccentricity of conduct. To such a character the extravagance of fanatical theology was no less adapted than any other fanciful hypothesis to dazzle his imagination, or impassioned enthusiasm to inflame his heart. He was, besides, fond of distinction; in the house of commons his lively and desultory sarcasms afforded relief to serious debate, but he was by no means qualified for attaining emi-
nence

nence as a British senator. Emulous rather than ambitious, if he acquired notoriety, he little regarded either the means or the objects. In Scotland he had taken an active share in the violence of the former year, and had corresponded with the most noted of the fanatical demagogues. In England, he intimated to the protestant club his theological sympathy; and proud of a titled associate, these persons complimented him with an offer of the president's chair. Behold lord George Gordon now the chief bulwark of the protestant faith against the approaches of antichrist! He entered the more eagerly into the views of those reforming saints, because he saw they confined themselves to theological theory, without scrupulously inquiring into moral practice; and that if he displayed an ardent zeal against popery, the president of the protestant association might pursue his former course of life with as little restraint as before his conversion*. His dress, however, and outward deportment, were formed entirely on the puritanical model: with the fanatical populace he passed for a primitive saint, and possessed an influence compounded of the effects of his exalted rank, sanctimonious appearance, and anti-popish zeal. These causes combining with the natural and habitual wildness of his irregular mind, produced in the end of May propo-

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and president of the
protestant
society.

* Mr. Wilkes, who had often been the companion of lord George's nocturnal adventures, applied to him, after his regeneration, part of a latin epitaph on Fleetwood Shepherd, another very zealous religionist of similar habits and propensities: *Nulla meretrix displicuit, præter Babylonicam—Except the harlot of Babylon, he was a friend to the whole sisterhood.*

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1780.

Petition to
parliament
for the re-
peal of the
tolerant
law.

fitions of a most inflammatory nature, which were speedily adopted as resolutions by the society. On Monday the 29th of May, a meeting was held at coach-makers' hall, to consider the mode of presenting to the house of commons a petition against popery. In a most furious speech, lord George endeavoured to persuade his hearers of the rapid and alarming progress of the Romish doctrines; declared that the only way to obstruct their progress, was by approaching parliament with a firm and resolute tone, and demonstrating to their representatives that they were determined to preserve their religious freedom with their lives. He would himself run all hazards with the people, when their conscience and their country called them forth: he was not a lukewarm man: if they meant to spend their time in mock debate and idle opposition, they must chuse another leader. A speech so perfectly coincident with the passions and prepossessions of its hearers, was, received with the loudest applause. The president moved a resolution, that the whole protestant association should, on the following Friday, meet in St. George's Fields, at ten o'clock, and thence proceed to the house of commons. They were to advance in four divisions, the protestants of the city of London occupying the right wing, were to file off to London Bridge, and to march through the city; those of Southwark in the centre, were to take the route of Blackfriars; the left wing belonging to Westminster wheeling to the left, were to cross Westminster Bridge, followed by the presbyterians from Scotland, who were to cover the rear. The friends of the re-
formed

formed religion were to ascertain their attachment to the faith by blue cockades, bearing the inscription *No popery*. These resolutions and dispositions might have alarmed men, who considered the powerful operation of religious fury, and the dreadful effects which it has so often produced; but ministers appeared to apprehend no danger, and actually, in the intervening days, adopted no measures for preventing tumult.

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On Friday the 2d of June, at the hour appointed, about fifty thousand persons met in the fields, and thence proceeded in the prescribed order to the house of commons: having arrived at the avenues to both houses of parliament, they insulted many of the members who were proceeding to discharge their senatorial duty. Lord George repeatedly came from the place which he held as a senator, and harangued the populace, exhorting them to persevere in urging their application, so as to threaten the violation of a senator's privilege. Several members expostulated with him on the outrages which his conduct was likely to produce*. The petition being

A mob surrounds parliament.

Firm and manly conduct of the legislature.

* Lord George still exhorted the mob to persist, and many feared that the banditti would break into the house; whereupon a gallant veteran, belonging to as noble a family as lord George himself, and a member of parliament, putting his hand upon his sword, said, "Lord George, if one man of your lawless followers enter our house, I shall consider rebellion as begun, and plunge my sword into you as its leader and promoter." This resolute speech restrained the violence of Gordon, and is supposed to have contributed powerfully to save the house from such audacious intrusion †.

† Of this fact I was informed many years ago, by a gentleman who was present; and often have heard it repeated by others. The officer was general James Murray, uncle to the duke of Athol.

presented,

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Dreadful
riots in
London,

presented, was, after very little debate, rejected by a majority of one hundred and ninety-two to six. In the evening a mob burned the Romish chapels belonging to the Sardinian and Bavarian ambassadors. On Saturday, the riots partly subsided. *Sunday*, the zealots again assembled to disturb the tranquillity of their fellow-subjects, to violate law, order, and justice. Directing their outrages against Moorfields, where there were many catholics, they destroyed dwelling-houses and chapels. On Monday, the rioters again assembled, and were joined by a multitude of those profligate and disorderly wretches, whom folly and vice, in the luxuries of a large and opulent city, impel to supply by depredation the want of industry and virtue. Lawless atrocity being now united to religious frenzy, produced more extensive and pernicious operations. They burnt the houses of protestants as well as catholics, and added plunder to conflagration. A proclamation was issued, offering a reward of 500l. for the discovery of the incendiaries, who, the first evening of the tumults, had set fire to the chapels of the ambassadors. Persons charged with this crime were sent to Newgate, escorted by a party of guards; and the soldiers were insulted and abused by the insurgents for performing their duty. On Tuesday, all the troops in town were distributed to assist the civil powers in protecting the lives and properties of their fellow-subjects, against the frantic outrages of temporary insanity, joined to the skilful and dexterous wickedness of habitual depravity. But the precautions of ministers had been neither proportionate to the danger, nor adopted at the season when

1779.

Numerous
conflagra-
tions.

when the first appearance of tumult called for vigilance and vigour. The military force was on that day inadequate to its purposes, robbery and destruction rapidly increased. After burning many private houses, the insurgents proceeded to Newgate, set that building on fire, and by releasing the prisoners, acquired a reinforcement of three hundred ruffians, eager to promote, and ready to execute, their projects of desperate villany. Instigated and assisted by this new band, they directed their attempts against the magistrates who were most active in apprehending felons and repressing crimes, and with peculiar exultation they destroyed the house and effects of sir John Fielding. Resolved to attack justice in every department, they proceeded from her operative instrument to her supreme and wisest interpreter, and most vigilant guardian. Hastening to Bloomsbury-square, they attacked the house of the illustrious Mansfield, plundered and destroyed the valuable furniture, the constituents of accommodation and ornament; pictures, statues, and sculpture, the monuments of the attic elegance and taste which decorated genius and philosophy: but they effected a more momentous and irreparable mischief; proceeding to the library, they destroyed not only the books, but the manuscripts. The efforts of the highest talents, directed to the most important objects, with complete and comprehensive knowledge of the science of jurisprudence, the laws of this country, the details of cases varying so greatly in the manifold and complicated engagements of social, civil, and commercial life, in a great, powerful, and free

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Tremen-
dous aspect
of the burn-
ing metro-
polis.Prisons
broken
open.

free people; the judicial and legislative wisdom of sixty years fell a sacrifice to the ruffian violence of an hour. When the yell of savage fury was heard approaching, lord Mansfield and his lady escaped by a postern, sought and found an asylum from royal hospitality*. On Wednesday, proceeding to Holborn, they set fire to two houses belonging to Mr. Langdale, an eminent distiller, which contained immense quantities of spirituous liquors; here the conflagration was terrible. Different gangs now undertook and effected the demolition of the several prisons. All trade was at a stand, houses and shops were shut, dread and consternation overspread the whole city. Wednesday evening, when drawing to a close, presented a scene the most tremendous and dismal, apparently portending the speedy downfall of the British metropolis, and the overthrow of the British government. At the same instant were seen, flames ascending and rolling in clouds from the king's bench and fleet prisons, new bridewell, the toll gates on Blackfriars bridge, houses in every quarter of the town, and especially the combustion of distilled spirits in Holborn. The approaching night was expected to bring destruction and desolation, and thirty fires were now seen blazing at one time in different quarters of the

* They passed the two following days at Buckingham-house; where the sage, after so recent a view of the dreadful effects of unrestrained passion and triumphant vice, entertained his queen with reciting, from the instructive inculcations, elegant composition, and impressive eloquence of Blair, the charms of wisdom and the happiness of virtue.

city:

city: men and women were running from place to place, trying to secure their most valued effects, and to deposit in safety their helpless children. Now was heard the fell roar of savage ferocity, now the reports of musquetry, endeavouring by the last resource of necessity, to repress rebellious fury, but hitherto with little effect; and every thing appeared to menace universal anarchy and devastation. Attempts were made on the repositories of national treasure. A banditti of rioters made an effort to break into the pay-office, while the main body directed their attempt against the bank, and a powerful detachment was sent off to co-operate with the incendiaries, by cutting the pipes of the new river. But now the career of infatuation and anarchy was destined to have an end.

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1780.

The bank
threatened.

Attempt to
cut the
pipes of the
New River.

The ministers were certainly too tardy in collecting the armed force of the country, and thus suffered the insurgents to incur heinous guilt, and perpetrate irremediable and immense mischief. The chief municipal magistrate, overwhelmed with the same terror that had seized the rest of the inhabitants, brought no active or efficient civil force to assist the military. Though ministers were tardy, yet they were at length by necessity roused to vigour and energy. They assembled the militia and regulars in sufficient time to preserve the capital from conflagration, and the kingdom from ruin. Until Wednesday evening the insurgents had been paramount, and the soldiers unable to oppose their outrages; but they were now assembled in such numbers, and inspired with such resolution, as effectually to resist, and afterwards to over-

Military re-
inforce-
ments ar-
rive;

power

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and at
length prove
victorious.Insurrection
crushed,
and tran-
quility re-
stored.

power the depredators and anarchists. The three preceding days and nights had been to the incendiaries seasons of unresisted victory: this was a night of contest. The troops at length prevailed. The numbers killed in this conflict were considerable: many indeed died of inebriation, especially at the distillery of the unfortunate Mr. Langdale, from whose vessels the liquor ran down the middle of the street, was taken up by pail fulls, and held to the mouths of the deluded multitude. The soldiers had been so successful during the night, and received such reinforcements, that on Thursday the inhabitants began to recover from their consternation. The riots, however, being by no means quelled, the shops continued universally shut, and no business was transacted but at the bank. During this day, the soldiers were so active, that the insurgents were dispersed, and did not attempt to rally at night; the following day London appeared restored to order and tranquillity, lord George Gordon being apprehended by a warrant from the secretary of state, and committed to the tower. Thus ended the tumult of 1780.

In retracing this tremendous insurrection, this horrible carnage and devastation, through the several causes, more or less proximate, to the ultimate; from military execution to rebellious outrage; English protestant association, springing from Scottish association; we find that the series originated in the well-meant, but misguided zeal of a few Scottish clergymen, who, contrary to the advice of the ablest and wisest men of their order, agitated

agitated the subject in the general assembly, and thereby excited a ferment through the people. So cautiously ought men to investigate and appretiate objects, and to consider consequences before they set in motion such a formidable engine as popular enthusiasm. Issuing from impassioned fanaticism, this insurrection began, most fortunately for the country, without any concerted plan. Had the bank and the public offices been the first objects of tumultuous fury, instead of the houses of individuals, the chapels and the prisons, there can be little doubt that they would have succeeded in their attempt. To the lord mayor, government and many others imputed the progress of the riots to such a pitch of atrocity. Very strong and pointed representations from the secretary of state urged him to use every legal exertion. These not having produced the desired effect, were necessarily repeated in the form of remonstrances. It was alleged, on the other hand, in defence of the magistrate, that the provision of military force in the environs of London was so little adequate to the exigency of the case, as to render every effort of civil power unavailing. To this defence it was replied, that the inefficiency of the civil power could not be certainly pronounced, as it was not actually tried; and that since the soldiers by themselves prevented the utter destruction of the capital, until the arrival of sufficient troops from the country, if they had been assisted by the municipal force, they might have much sooner repressed the insurgents, and prevented a great part of the mischief. Neither duty nor policy, it was said, can justify the commander of
a con-

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Loud complaints
against the
lord mayor.

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a considerable force, in the moment of threatened ruin to his country, to withhold his efforts, on a supposition that they may not ultimately prevail. Both wisdom and patriotism dictate resistance, as the only means of success against the invaders of our law, liberty, and property.

The effects produced by the riots on the public mind, are not undeserving of historical notice. Before this period, an English mob was generally considered as a test of the public opinion, an effusion of popular energy; military interference was reckoned dangerous, if not altogether unconstitutional. This seemed to be the opinion of the duke of Newcastle, when he kept a mob in pay, ready trained and disciplined, to support the recent accession of the house of Hanover, and to suppress tory tumults; a mode of conduct which had a more successful, or at least a more popular effect, than recourse to military force. But this conduct of the mob of 1780, destroyed the credit and consequence of such a body; and the disturbance has been, upon the whole, deemed fortunate for the internal peace of the country, as it has taught government to oppose the smallest beginnings of riot or popular commotion.

On the 6th day of June, during the insurrection, above two hundred members of the house of commons had the courage to attend their duty, in spite of the banditti that occupied every avenue to the senate. They forced their way through the mob, and having taken their places in the house, unanimously passed spirited resolutions, becoming the dignity of legislators who disdained to succumb

to lawless outrage. The first was an assertion of their own privileges; the second, a motion for a committee to inquire into the late and present outrages, and for the discovery of their authors, promoters, and abettors; the third, for a prosecution by the attorney-general; and the fourth, an address to his majesty, for the reimbursement of the foreign ministers, to the amount of the damages which they had sustained by the rioters. They afterwards met on the 8th, but judged it expedient to adjourn to the 19th, that order might be completely restored; and the house of lords adjourned to the same day. At their next meeting, his majesty was pleased to come to parliament, in order to exhibit to the legislature a general view of the measures which had been employed during the recent suspension of regular government. "The outrages," said the king, "committed by the hands of desperate and abandoned men in various parts of this metropolis, having broke forth with violence into acts of felony and treason, had so far overborne all civil authority, and threatened so directly the immediate subversion of all legal power, the destruction of all property, and the confusion of every order in the state, that I found myself obliged, by every tie of duty and affection to my people, to suppress in every part those rebellious insurrections, and to provide for the public safety by the most effectual and immediate application of the force entrusted to me by parliament. Though I trust it is not necessary, yet I think it right at this time to renew to you my solemn assurances, that I have no other object but to make the laws of the

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1780.

realm, and the principles of our excellent constitution in church and state, the rule and measure of my conduct; and I shall ever consider it as the first duty of my station, and the chief glory of my reign, to maintain and preserve the established religion of my kingdoms, and, as far as in me lies, to secure and perpetuate the rights and liberties of my people." All parties agreed in applauding their sovereign's speech, and in voting a loyal address; though some members censured the tardiness with which ministers had prepared for the defence of the metropolis. The following day, a committee of the whole house considered the several petitions, praying for a repeal of the late bill, which had been made the occasion of so much mischief. No repeal was proposed upon those petitions; no evil had actually happened from the relaxation of the single penal law which had been mitigated, and the consequences apprehended from it were considered as improbable and visionary. The protestant association still continuing to urge parliament to attend to their application, a bill was brought in by way of compromise, to prevent Roman catholics from teaching protestants; a measure which was supposed to be both conciliatory and innoxious, as very few of that religion were teachers. The bill having passed the commons, was carried to the house of lords: several peers, considering it a great indignity to parliament, and to that house particularly, to pass a bill which carried all the appearance of being forced upon them by outrage and threat, opposed its enactment. At length, others being impressed with the same idea,

idea, it was set aside by the usual expedient of fixing its farther consideration on a day after the time when they knew parliament was to be prorogued.

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1780.

The supplies for the service of the year 1780 amounted to 21,196,496 l. The number of seamen employed was eighty-five thousand, including marines, and thirty-five thousand British troops, including invalids, besides the forces abroad. No more than a million and a half of the navy debt was discharged. The extraordinary expences of the army amounted to 2,418,805 l. The new taxes, which had been levied the two preceding years to pay the interest upon the money borrowed, were found to be very inadequate to their object; recourse was therefore had to the sinking fund to make good this failure. To provide for these expences, in addition to the usual resources of land and malt, exchequer bills were renewed to the same amount as the former year. The sinking fund was to provide two millions and a half, twelve millions were borrowed upon annuities, and 480,000 l. raised by a lottery. The annuity bore four *per cent.* interest, and a farther annuity of 1 l. 16 s. 3 d. for every 100 l. for the term of eight years, the subscribers to be entitled to four lottery tickets for every thousand pounds subscribed, on payment of ten pounds for each ticket. The additional duties were, on malt, low wines, spirits, brandy, and rum, wines of Portugal and France, and legacies; on tea, coffee, and chocolate; and on advertisements in newspapers. All these taxes were levied from luxuries, or benefits enjoyed by the persons

Supplies.

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Session rises.

Parliament
is dissolved.

taxed: but duties on coals and on salt enhanced the price of necessaries, and bore heavy on the poor, whom every wise financier endeavours to press lightly. A vote of credit also for a million was passed, in addition to these supplies. At the conclusion of the session, his majesty, after having considered in his speech the war supplies and other usual topics, spoke in the following terms, at once generally descriptive of the duties of senators when retired to the sphere of their respective influence, and appropriate to the present time and situation: "My lords and gentlemen, let me earnestly recommend to you to assist me, by your influence and authority in your several counties, as you have by your unanimous support in parliament, in guarding the peace of the kingdom from future disturbances, and watching over the preservation of the public safety. Make my people sensible of the happiness they enjoy, and the distinguished advantages they derive FROM OUR EXCELLENT CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH AND STATE. Warn them of the hazard of innovation, point out to them the fatal consequences of such commotions as have lately been excited, and let it be your care to impress on their minds this important truth—that rebellious insurrections, to resist, or to reform the laws, must end either in the destruction of the persons who make the attempt, or in subversion of our free and happy constitution." Thus ended, on the 8th of July, a very long and important session; and two months after the prorogation, parliament was dissolved.

CHAP. XXV.

War with the French in India—siege and capture of Pondicherry—confederacy against the British interest—war with the Marhattas—is concluded by the treaty at Poonah.—Hyder Ally instigates and forms a combination of native power against British India.—Warren Hastings—lofty genius—grand scheme for dissolving the confederacy—preparations of Hyder Ally to invade the Carnatic.—Europe.—Admiral Rodney—vindicates the naval glory of England by a signal victory over the Spanish fleet—important effects of this battle—relieves Gibraltar.—Spanish and French fleets do not attempt a junction.—Capture of the outward-bound merchantmen—admiralty severely blamed.—America.—Expedition against Charlestown by sir Henry Clinton—strength of that place, natural and artificial—siege—reduction—the province of South Carolina yields to the British arms.—Leaving the government of Carolina to lord Cornwallis, Clinton returns to New York.—Wise administration of his lordship—obliged to take the field against general Gates—battle of Camden—lord Rawdon—victory of the king's troops.—Achievements of Tarleton—of major Fergusson that able and gallant officer surprised and overpowered by numbers—death and character.—Affairs at New York—defection of general Arnold—character, enterprize, and fate of major André.—West Indies.—Rodney arrives—his skill draws the enemy to battle—established mode of forming the naval line—Rodney adopts a new plan of attack BY BREAKING THE ENEMY'S LINE—some captains misconceiving his intention, disconcert the execution—the event therefore indecisive—partial conflicts, but the enemy, though much superior in number, will not venture a close fight.—The enemy are disappointed in their chief objects of the campaign 1780.

WHEN Britain and France quarrel, the contests of these two boldest, most enterprizing, and ablest of modern nations, affect the remotest regions of

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1780.

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War with
the French
in the East
Indies.

of the earth. Disputes springing on the neighbouring coasts of the Channel, tinge the distant Ganges with blood; and the pacific feebleness of eastern Asia mourns the warlike energy of western Europe.

The English East India company, with a perspicacity sharpened by private interest, had early penetrated into the hostile intentions of France, and saw that the semblance of peace could not long be preserved, and that no intermediate state, however coloured or disguised, could be kept long free from all the consequences of war; they were aware that, long before any account of their proceedings in the East could be received in Europe, these consequences would take such effect as to afford a sufficient cover and sanction to their measures. Before the commencement of the former war, the French had clandestinely conveyed so great an army to the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon, as to endanger the destruction of the British interest in India. Such a force might soon again be formed in those islands with equal privacy, and passing to Pondicherry, might enter the company's dominions so suddenly, as irresistibly to secure their possessions. Against so probable a danger, they immediately, on the delivery of the French rescript, resolved on a bold and decisive measure; and numerous as their body was, they conducted their plan with such extraordinary secrecy, that none entertained the smallest idea of the design, until the effect was publicly disclosed by the accounts from India. They proposed to undertake the siege of Pondicherry, the principal possession of the French; and fortunately the instructions were conveyed

veyed with unusual dispatch to Madras. Major-general Munro, early in August 1778, advanced at the head of the company's troops to the neighbourhood of Pondicherry. The naval force of England in those seas was commanded by sir Edward Vernon, and consisted of the Rippon of sixty guns, the Coventry of twenty-eight, the Sea-horse of twenty, the Cormorant sloop, and the Valentine East India-man. This small force fearlessly ventured to attack this strong city of the French. On the 10th of August they arrived at this station, and discovered a squadron, which was commanded by M. De Tronjolly, consisting of one ship of sixty-four guns, one of thirty-six, one of thirty-two, and two French India ships armed for war. A very hot engagement ensued, and lasted above two hours, when, on the approach of night, the French retreated. Vernon expected that the admiral of the enemy, trusting to his superior force, would renew the battle the next morning; a contrary wind, however, and a northern current, drove the British ships from their station in the middle of the night, and they were not able to recover it until the 20th of the month. Having regained sight of Pondicherry, they perceived the French fleet in the road: an immediate engagement was now expected, and nothing was left undone by the commodore, in order to close with the enemy; but the alternate failure and contrary direction of the wind rendered all his efforts ineffectual: he trusted, however, that a battle would certainly take place the following morning. The French commander consulted the preservation of his ships more than the defence of

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capture of
Pondicherry,

the town, and during the night abandoned Pondicherry; and so expeditious was he in his means of escape, that his squadron were totally out of fight in the morning. The success of Vernon, and the departure of the French fleet, facilitated the operations of the besiegers, and appeared to afford a certain prospect of success. On the 21st of August, the land forces invested the town and fortresses, while the fleet blockaded it by sea. Though the fort of Pondicherry was dismantled on its restoration to the French by the peace of Paris, yet fresh works had been since raised; but the chief strength consisted in the valour and conduct of its governor, M. de Bellecombe, and the courage of the garrison, who, nearly cut off from every hope of succour, persevered to the last extremity in a determined and gallant defence; they were opposed, however, by equal courage and military ability, with superior numbers. On the 18th of September, the batteries were opened, under the powerful fire of twenty-eight pieces of heavy cannon, and twenty-seven mortars. The artillery of the besiegers soon gained an evident superiority, and they were indefatigable in carrying on their approaches; but the activity and obstinate defence of the garrison rendered caution necessary, and, with violent rains which then frequently fell, could not fail of considerably retarding their works. Notwithstanding these impediments, the siege was so far advanced by the middle of October, as to render a general assault practicable; and on the 17th, every thing was ready for beginning the attack. Aware of the hopelessness of longer defence against such

such force, and of the ruin in which an obstinate and unfounded perseverance would involve his garrison and the inhabitants, the French commander proposed a capitulation, which was willingly accepted by the English leaders. The victorious warriors, with the generosity of British conquerors, bore the most ample and honourable testimony to the gallantry of their enemy, and liberally agreed to every requisition that did not interfere with the public benefit or security. The garrison were allowed all the honours of war; and, as a particular mark of attention to M. de Bellecombe, the regiment of Pondicherry was, at his request, allowed to keep their colours. A numerous artillery became a prize to the victors; all public property underwent the same fate, but whatever was private was preserved to the owners. The company's troops employed in this siege consisted of ten thousand five hundred men, of whom fifteen hundred were Europeans; the garrison of near three thousand, of whom nine hundred were Europeans. The loss of the British amounted to two hundred and twenty-four slain, and six hundred and ninety-three wounded; and of the garrison to two hundred killed. Mr. Law, who had seen and undergone so many changes of fortune in India, was included in this capitulation, and again beheld the power of his country annihilated in that quarter of the globe. Thus commenced our efforts in British India, in the war against the French.

While our enemy was defeated on the coast of Coromandel, an extensive and powerful confederacy was formed with our European antagonists by

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Confederacy against the British interest.

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by the native powers of Hindostan. From the decline of the Mogul empire, the principal state of India within the Ganges, in population, valour, and resources, was the Mahrattas empire, the original inhabitants of the mountains : hardened by their situation, and secured by their fastnesses and defiles, this warlike nation had continued unsubdued by the successive conquerors of lowland India, and never submitted to a Mahomedan yoke. Deriving a precarious subsistence from pasturage and hunting, these highlanders were accustomed to supply their wants by depredations on the agricultural and fertile country, and hence acquired all the enterprize and activity which result from an incurfive and predatory life. Though divided into a variety of tribes, yet deeming themselves sprung from the same origin, they acknowledged one paramount superior to all their separate chieftains, and had established a system of connection and dependence, not unlike the feudal gradations of Europe. At their head was Ram Rajah, the descendant of a celebrated leader. In India, both Mahomedan and Gentoo, the principal offices of state descend by inheritance, and official influence, combining with hereditary power, frequently renders ministers very formidable rivals to their sovereigns. A little before this time, Madur Row, the prime minister, held the reins of government, which his father having with his assistance seized, had at his death left undivided to the son. Both the older and younger usurpers had exerted considerable ability, and acquired distinguished popularity. This youth's uncle, Raganaut Row, treacherously

treacherously procured his assassination, and being obliged to fly his country, found shelter at Bombay. The refuge afforded to the fugitive greatly incensed the Mahrattas against the English. The presidency of Bombay concluded a treaty with Raganaut, by which they engaged to place him in the official situation recently held by his nephew, while he, on his part, stipulated the cession of extensive territory to the company, and the British from this inducement actually commenced a war.

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By the treaty of 1769, Hyder Ally had stipulated with the company reciprocal assistance, if either party was attacked: he accordingly engaged in the war against the Mahrattas; but when thus involved, he complained that the presidency of Madras had not furnished him with the promised succours. He indeed was reduced to great danger, from which having extricated himself with distinguished ability, he concluded a peace with the Mahrattas; and was the more dissatisfied with the presidency of Madras, as he imputed the failure of support, not to negligence but to design. He was aware of the extraordinary influence which the Nabob of Arcot possessed in the English council, and not ignorant of the disposition of that prince to embroil him and the company, and therefore began to connect himself with the enemies of Britain. A desultory war was carried on between Bombay and the Mahrattas until October 1774, when three gentlemen arrived in Bengal, who, by the act of 1773, were to be assessors in council to the governor-general: these were, general Clavering, colonel Monson, and Philip Francis esquire; and

War with
the Mahrattas;

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is concluded by the treaty of Poonah.

Warren Hastings;

Hyder Ally instigates and forms a combination of native powers against British India.

and their first act was to urge the presidency of Calcutta to condemn the Mahratta war. The council complied, and sent an ambassador to negotiate a peace: after a variety of discussion, a treaty was concluded at Poonah, on the 13th of March, 1776.

The professed objects of the three new counselors were, peace with the country powers, along with an inviolable observation of the public faith, and a strict attention to justice in all transactions with the natives. The governor at this time was Warren Hastings, a man of lofty genius and acute understanding, of a very comprehensive range, great in his designs, fertile in invention, dexterous in plan, and firm, bold, and rapid in execution. The death of colonel Monson in 1776, and of general Clavering in 1777, left Mr. Francis unsupported in council, and placed Mr. Hastings in a majority. The governor-general had been outvoted in the question respecting the peace of Poonah, which was extremely disagreeable to the presidency of Bombay. That body, knowing the resolution that had taken place in the council at Calcutta, began to hope for a revival of the treaty, and the acquirement of much more advantageous terms. The governor-general appeared not unwilling to second their wishes; but a variety of complicated considerations produced from Hastings a much grander scheme of policy, and a more extensive system of measures, than the council of Bombay had expected, or even conceived. Hyder Ally, ever since his late peace with the Mahrattas, had sought the closest connection with that nation, and by his great political abilities, as well as his high personal character, had

had acquired powerful influence in their counsels. He had also, with singular zeal, assiduity, and success, paid court to the subah of the Decan: after the Mahrattas and Myfore, the chief native powers in the hither Peninsula, a negotiation was also opened between France, and both Myfore and the Mahrattas. Informed of all these circumstances, and from situation and conduct inferring design, Hastings entertained no doubt that a confederacy was projected against British India: though its specific object might not be hitherto defined, nor its extent ascertained, he had most probable grounds for concluding that a hostile combination was formed against those interests, with the advancement of which he principally was entrusted. He conceived it his duty to employ anticipatory measures, and began with a scheme worthy of his towering genius. As the Mahratta nation would be the most formidable member of the hostile league, he conceived the project of wresting the government of that country from the hands that now held it, and bestowing it on a sovereign, dependent on himself. The deposed Ram Rajah being dead without heirs, one of the pretenders to the Mahratta throne was Moodajee Boosla, the rajah of Berar, a considerable principality in the eastern part of the Mahratta empire, and near the British territories. This prince was on amicable terms with the presidency of Calcutta, and at variance with the Nizam and Hyder Ally, its apprehended enemies: he had a great army, unimpaired by war. Raganaut was promised the place of prime minister, when the rajah should be elevated to the throne; and having a considerable number

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Hastings's
grand
scheme for
dissolving
the concert.

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Prepara-
tions of
Hyder Ally
to invade
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Europe.

Admiral
Rodney

number of partisans in his country, was esteemed an important auxiliary. Meanwhile the presidency of Bombay having proposed conditions to the Mahrattas which they would not admit, declared that the treaty of Poonah was violated, and no longer binding on the company. An expedition being undertaken from Bombay, proved unsuccessful by the treachery of Raganaut, and a treaty was concluded at Wargaum, between the presidency of Bombay and the Mahrattas. Meanwhile preparations were making for elevating the rajah of Berar to the throne; but at last this prince himself refused to have any concern in the undertaking, and was gained over by Hyder Ally to take a part in the confederacy against the English. In 1779, a formal league was concluded between the four chief native powers against England; and to this the inferior princes soon afterwards acceded. From Delhi to Cape Comorin, from the Indus to the coast of Coromandel, all except Arcot was hostile to the English name. The first object of attack was the Carnatic, which expedition Hyder Ally undertook to conduct; but, as military operations did not begin till the latter end of the year 1780, not to break the unity of that portion of history, I must reserve the narrative of those transactions until I can carry them to a more advanced period.

The naval campaign of 1780 opened honourably and advantageously for Britain. Gibraltar having been closely blockaded by the Spaniards, the relief of that important fortress was entrusted to admiral Rodney, an officer highly distinguished for intrepidity, nautical skill, and naval conduct:
in

in his plans and execution he eminently displayed a boldness of adventure, that befitted a leader of Britons, who neither feared the dangers of the sea nor the enemy, and introduced a system of tactics the best suited to the men he had to command. Having failed at mid-winter, he had been but a short time at sea when he fell in with a considerable convoy, bound from St. Sebastian to Cadiz, consisting of fifteen merchant ships, guarded by a sixty-four gun ship, four frigates, and two sloops : the whole fleet was taken. The ship of war, and some trading vessels laden with bale goods and naval stores, he sent to England ; the rest, whose cargoes were flour, he took with him to Gibraltar. Proceeding in his voyage, on the 15th of January, he descried, off Cape St. Vincent, a Spanish squadron of eleven ships of the line, under the command of don Juan de Langara. The wind blowing towards the shore, the British admiral, on perceiving the enemy, immediately kept to leeward, in order to prevent them from escaping into their ports, favoured by the shortness of the day. The Spaniards in vain endeavoured to avoid a conflict. About four o'clock in the afternoon the English fire commencing with the usual energy and rapidity, was returned with spirit and resolution by the Spaniards. The battle was obstinately fought: the night soon arriving, was dark, tempestuous, and dismal, and its aspect was rendered more terrible to the British fleet, from being involved among the shoals of St. Lucre, in endeavouring to intercept the enemy from attaining the shore : but these difficulties and dangers only stimulated their courage,

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and

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vindicates
the naval
glory of
England by
a signal vic-
tory over
the Spanish
fleet.

and invigorated their efforts. The Spanish ship St. Domingo of seventy guns, with six hundred men, blew up, and all on board perished. The English man of war with which she was engaged, narrowly escaped a similar fate. The action and pursuit continued with a constant fire until two o'clock in the morning, when the headmost of the enemy's line struck to the admiral.

The Spanish admiral's ship, the Phoenix of eighty guns, with three of seventy, were taken and carried safely into port; the St. Julian of seventy guns, commanded by the Marquis de Medina, was taken, the officers shifted, and a lieutenant, with seventy British seamen, put on board; but by her running on shore, the victors experienced the caprice of war, by becoming themselves prisoners. Another ship of the same force was afterwards run upon the breakers, and totally lost; two more escaped greatly damaged, and two less injured were sent into Cadiz. Such was the final disposal of the whole Spanish squadron. . Notwithstanding the inferiority of the enemy in point of force, yet, as the British admiral had to encounter a boisterous ocean, during the storms of mid-winter, and gloomy darkness, with the additional danger of a lee-shore, few actions have required a higher degree of intrepidity, more consummate naval skill, or greater dexterity of seamanship.

Important
effects of
this battle.

This was a very important victory; besides the great damage sustained by the enemy, six ships of the line were added to the royal navy of England; and the value of other prizes, in a public view, was greatly enhanced by the nature of their cargoes,
the

the critical season in which they were taken, and the essential service to which they were applied. The victorious admiral proceeded to Gibraltar, furnished the garrison with necessary supplies, sent also stores and provisions to Minorca, and with part of his fleet set sail for the West Indies; the rest returned with the Spanish prizes to England, under admiral Digby, who in his way captured a French ship of sixty-four guns, one of a convoy to a fleet of transports destined for Mauritius. The success of admiral Rodney caused great joy in the nation, for some time disused to tidings of victory: besides the signal advantage obtained, they considered it as the general restoration of naval supremacy; and the discomfiture of the Spanish fleet off St. Vincent's, had a powerful effect on the operations in other scenes of naval hostility.

Sir Charles Hardy having died in May, the command of the Channel fleet was bestowed on admiral Geary, who sailed in the beginning of June. The enemy did not attempt to face our armament, but left their trade exposed to the British cruizers. In the beginning of July, the admiral fell in with a rich fleet of merchantmen from St. Domingo, and took twelve of the number; the rest escaped through a thick fog. After cruising for several several weeks longer, that commander returned into harbour, resigned the command, and was succeeded by admiral Darby. Meanwhile the British commerce received a severe blow: an outward-bound fleet of merchantmen for the East and West Indies sailed from Portsmouth, under the convoy of

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Capture of
the outward
bound mer-
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The admiralty is severely blamed

captain Moutray of the *Ramillies*, and three frigates. The Spanish fleet, joined by a squadron of French, was cruising off the coast of Spain and Portugal, without venturing to the northward of Cape Finis-terre. The convoy included, besides the merchantmen, eighteen victuallers, store-ships, and transports, destined for the service of the West Indies. One of these was of particular importance, being laden with tents and camp equipage for the troops that were designed for active service in the Leeward Islands: the five Indiamen likewise, besides arms, ammunition, and a train of artillery, conveyed a large quantity of naval stores for the supply of the British squadron in the east. The convoy took a course much nearer the enemy's coast than was usual, or at least expedient. On the 9th of August, it met with the enemy's fleet, and most of the merchantmen were captured. This loss caused great dejection among commercial men, and increased the dissatisfaction which had before prevailed against ministry. It was alleged by the friends of administration, that the convoy had pursued that track in order to accommodate the merchants and the East India company, who were taking in wines at Madeira: but it was replied, that the accommodation of the merchants was not a sufficient reason for touching at that island, with such danger of interception; that a course so near the enemy's coast was not necessary in order to steer to Madeira; and that if so easterly a track had been unavoidable, the convoy of such an immense property ought, instead of a single man of war and three frigates, to have been

been the whole Channel fleet. Admiral Darby having been detained by contrary winds at Torbay, put to sea about the middle of September, and steered to the coast of Spain. Count de Guichen was ordered with a squadron to reinforce the fleet in the West Indies, but finding his ships in a very indifferent condition, and being informed that the English fleet had sailed, he resolved for safety to join the combined armament off Cadiz. The French fleet, commanded by d'Estaing, being thus reinforced, consisted of thirty-six sail of the line, which undertook to conduct the West India convoy to the ports of France. Don Louis de Cordova, the Spanish admiral, accompanied the French as far as Cape Finisterre. After their separation from the Spaniards, the French fleet descried admiral Darby, on the 7th of November, with twenty-two ships of the line and two ships of fifty guns. D'Estaing, notwithstanding the great superiority of his numbers, being encumbered by the convoy, and aware of the bad condition of his ships, did not chuse to hazard an engagement. Darby, on the other hand, observing the vast superiority of number on the side of the enemy, did not think it expedient to venture a battle. Ministers conceived that in the relative circumstances the most decisive advantages must have ensued, and without imputing any blame to the admiral, expressed their regret that he had not attacked the enemy. Darby, in the end of November, returned into port.

The campaign both in America and the West-Indies was much more active and important than in Europe. In the former year, the arrival of

America.

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d'Estaing with the French force on the American coast had turned the attention of sir Henry Clinton chiefly to defence; but the defeat and departure of that enemy, with the brilliant achievements and important successes of British detachments, encouraged him to hope for proportionate advantage from a comprehensive scheme of offensive operations to be carried on by his main army. He accordingly, in the close of 1779, made dispositions for invading South Carolina and besieging Charlestown: with this view, leaving general Knyphausen to command at New York, he, on the 26th of December, sailed from Sandyhook, escorted by admiral Arbuthnot, and directed his course to Savannah; where, from the stormy season, he did not arrive until the end of January. The ships being considerably damaged, he deferred his expedition for about twelve days, that they might be refitted.

Expedition
against
Charlestown by sir
Henry
Clinton.

Strength of
that place,
natural and
artificial.

Charlestown, the capital of South Carolina, is situated between the rivers Ashley and Cooper to the north and south; with a harbour formed by the conflux of those streams, and an inlet of the sea to the east; communicating to the west with the main land by an isthmus between the two rivers, called Charlestown Neck, by which only the town can be approached by land. To these natural constituents of security, art and skill were not wanting. The fortifications had been considerably strengthened in 1776, to oppose sir Peter Parker; but chiefly on the side next the sea, whence the attacks had been directed. The Americans, being now informed of the movements and force of the
British

British arms, and aware that the town would be attempted on the side of the land, comprehended that quarter in their scheme of defence. They constructed a chain of redoubts, lines, and batteries, extending from Ashley to Cooper river, upon which were mounted upwards of eighty pieces of cannon and mortars. In front of the lines a canal had been dug, which was filled with water, and from the dam at both ends a swamp oozed to each river, forming natural impediments where the artificial terminated. Behind these were two rows of abbattis, some other obstructions, and immediately in front of the works a double picketed ditch. The fortifications on the right and left were not only strong, but advanced so far beyond the range of the intermediate lines, as to enfilade the canal almost from one end to the other. In the centre there was a hornwork of masonry, which being closed during the siege, became a citadel.

Such were the defences of Charlestown, on the only side on which it could be approached by land; and towards the water, numerous batteries covered with artillery forbade the approach of ships. But besides the security which Charlestown derived from its numerous batteries, it was still more effectually protected by the bar or sand-bank at the mouth of the inlet from the sea. This bar, impassable by the larger ships of war, rendered the entry of others difficult and dangerous; and just within it, a five-fathom hole, of a sufficient depth of water, furnished a convenient station for a squadron to command the bar, and farther obstruct the besiegers. This station was occupied by the Ame-

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rican commodore Whipple, with a squadron of nine sail under his command, the largest carrying forty-four, and the smallest sixteen guns. After the perils and difficulties of the bar were surmounted, before a fleet could reach Charlestown, Fort Moultrie upon Sullivan's Island was to be passed, the fire from which had, on a former occasion, proved so destructive to a British squadron; and since that period, the works had been considerably strengthened and enlarged. General Lincoln trusting to those defences, and at the same time expecting large reinforcements from the other colonies, shut himself up in Charlestown at the earnest request of the inhabitants; and with the force under his command, amounting to seven thousand men of all denominations under arms, resolved to defend it to the last extremity. On the 11th of February the fleet sailed; and took possession without opposition of the islands of St. John and of James to the southward of Charlestown harbour, while the army advanced across the country to the bank of Ashley river. Being at great pains to fortify posts, and preserve his communication with the sea, Clinton did not attempt to pass the Ashley until the 29th of March. This operation, in itself very difficult, was effected with expedition and success, through the skill and activity of captain Keith Elphinstone, who conducted the passage of the troops with distinguished address and ability. Having disembarked on the northern shore of Ashley, the army the following day encamped in front of the American line; and on the 1st of April, began to break ground before Charlestown, at the distance of

Siege of
Charlestown.

of eight hundred yards from the provincial works. Meanwhile the British fleet approached the bar, in order to second the operations of the army. For this purpose admiral Arbuthnot shifted his flag from the Europa of the line, to the Roebuck of forty-four guns, which, with the Renown and Ramillies, were lightened of their guns, provisions, and water; the lighter frigates being capable of passing the bar without such preparation. Yet so difficult was the task in any state, that they lay in that situation, exposed on an open coast in the winter season to the danger of the seas and to the insults of the enemy, for above a fortnight before a proper opportunity offered: the bar was, however, passed on the 20th of March, without loss.

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The American commodore retired to Charlestown; the British ships embraced the first opportunity for passing Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, and notwithstanding a severe and impetuous fire, made good the way. Still the Americans had preserved the command of the Cooper river. General Clinton having now ascertained the co-operation of the fleet, and completed his first parallel, before he opened his batteries sent a summons to the American general to surrender. Lincoln, trusting to the strength of the place, and to the supplies and reinforcements which he might still receive by the Cooper, refused to yield; and to render the entrance of that river impracticable, ordered a chain of vessels to be sunk across its mouth. On the 9th of April, the British batteries opened, with visible effect. Meanwhile a force was detached under

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lord Cornwallis, in order to possess the other side of the Cooper river; and his lordship, assisted by the enterprising activity of colonels Webster and Tarleton, and major Fergusson, soon cut off all communication between the garrison of Charlestown and any part of the country. Completely invested, the Americans offered conditions of capitulation; which being much too favourable for the present state, were instantly rejected by the British commander. Major Moncrieff, who had gained so much honour in the defence of Savannah, acquired no less applause from the very superior and masterly manner in which he conducted the offensive operations of the siege. The second parallel was completed on the 19th of April, and the third on the 6th of May. The last of these had been pushed so near to the provincial works, as to be close to the canal; and the canal, for a considerable part of its extent, was quickly drained of its water. On the same day, colonel Tarleton attacked and defeated another body of cavalry, which the enemy had with infinite difficulty collected together. The admiral, who had constantly pressed and annoyed the enemy, received information which induced him to attack Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island; he therefore dispatched captain Hudson of the navy, with two hundred seamen and marines, to attack the fort by land, while he with the ships should batter it by water; but before the battery was opened, the garrison surrendered. After this advantage, general Clinton, wishing to preserve Charlestown from the dreadful effects of a capture by storm, again urged the American general by capitulation to

to avert destruction; but the provincials, not being sufficiently humbled by their misfortunes, still refused to comply. The hostilities were recommenced: the batteries on the third parallel were then opened, and so great a superiority of fire obtained, that the besiegers were enabled to gain the counterscarps of the outwork which flanked the canal: this they likewise passed, and then pushed on their works directly towards the ditch. General Lincoln and the inhabitants, seeing that farther resistance would be ineffectual, offered to surrender. The British commanders were not disposed to press to unconditional submission, an enemy whom they wished to conciliate by clemency; they therefore granted now the same conditions which they had before offered, and the capitulation was accordingly signed. The garrison was allowed some of the honours of war, but neither to uncase their colours, nor beat a British march on their drums. The continental troops and seamen were to keep their baggage, and remain prisoners of war until they were exchanged. The militia were permitted to return to their respective houses, as prisoners on parole; and while they adhered to their engagement, were not to be molested by the British troops: and the citizens were allowed the same terms as the militia. The loss of the royalists at the siege of Charlestown amounted to seventy-six killed, and one hundred and eighty-nine wounded. Of the garrison, the number of the killed and wounded, was smaller. The prisoners were, the deputy-governor and the council of the province, seven general officers, a commodore, ten continental regiments, but

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Charlestown is reduced.

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but much reduced, three battalions of artillery, with town and country militia, amounting to more than five thousand men; to whom must be added about one thousand American and French seamen, and near four hundred pieces of ordnance, with a considerable quantity of stores. The commander in chief bestowed the highest encomiums on the officers and privates in the various departments of service. The officers most particularly specified were, earl Cornwallis, major-generals Leslie, Hayne, and Kosputch, and brigadier-general Patterson; lieutenant-colonels Webster and Tarleton, major Fergusson, and major Moncrieff of the engineers, in the land service; and captain Keith Elphinstone in the navy.

The province of South Carolina yields to the British arms.

In the sanguine hopes that spring from unusual success, sir Henry Clinton considered the reduction of Charlestown as the completion of the conquest of South Carolina, and a prelude to the speedy recovery of the southern colonies. He expected, indeed, that the provincials themselves would now effectually co-operate in the re-establishment of their former connection with the mother-country. Great numbers flocked to Charlestown from all parts of Carolina, to pay their court to the conquerors, and offer their services in support of his majesty's government. The general, with exulting joy, transmitted to the American minister these professions, and attributed to the affection of loyalty, what penetration might have discovered, and experience soon ascertained to be, in most instances, the dissimulation of policy, or the extorted homage of fear. Confident that his projects could be

be accomplished by a part of his army, he left a division for that purpose under lord Cornwallis, and returned with the rest to New York. Before Clinton's departure, Cornwallis had been employed to drive out of the province a body of continental troops under colonel Burford, who arriving too late to throw succours into Charlestown, had posted himself on the northern banks of the Santee. Here being joined by those of the American cavalry who had survived their last defeat by Tarleton, he made a show of opposition to the British interest, and endeavoured to keep alive the expiring hopes of the provincials. On the 18th of May earl Cornwallis began the pursuit, and on the 1st of June he overtook the enemy, and gained a complete victory. Of the Americans one hundred and thirteen were killed, and two hundred and three taken prisoners, of whom one hundred and fifty were wounded; Burford made his escape on horseback.

The American force being entirely driven from South Carolina, his lordship directed his attention to the internal administration of the province; while he was also making dispositions for marching into North Carolina, as soon as the heat should be abated, and the harvest being finished should enable him to form magazines for subsisting his troops. He established a board of police for the administration of justice, until the state of the province should admit of the regular re-establishment of its former civil government. He made commercial arrangements for permitting the inhabitants to export the produce of their country, enrolled the

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Leaving the government of Carolina to lord Cornwallis, Clinton returns to New York.

Wise administration of his lordship.

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the militia for assisting in defending the colony, and brought the country to a state of tranquillity and order; but these pleasing appearances had no long duration. Of the persons attached to the American cause, who since the capture of Charlestown had submitted to the British government, either by taking the oath of allegiance, or obtaining a parole, some were influenced by the ruinous appearance of American affairs, the despair of ultimate success, and a wish to save the remains of their property that had escaped the ravages and devastations of war; and others were determined by the fear of punishment. The congress and Washington, well acquainted with the fallacy of the loyal professions, and with the real dispositions of a great majority in South Carolina, resolved to send a detachment of the grand army to their assistance. The exertions of Virginia and North Carolina greatly increased the destined force; and general Gates with a considerable army advanced to the southern provinces.

He is obliged to take the field against general Gates.

Informed that the American general was marching towards Camden, lord Cornwallis was compelled to leave the civil arrangements, in which he had been so meritoriously and beneficially engaged, and to resume military operations. On the 10th of August he set out, with fifteen hundred regular troops and five hundred militia; on his march he was informed that Gates with near six thousand men had already entered the province. On the 15th, the armies came in sight of each other at Camden: both generals ordered their troops to halt and form;

form; but it being very late in the evening, they did not engage till the next morning. Lord Cornwallis was posted on ground particularly advantageous to inferior numbers; a swamp on each side secured his army from being flanked, and narrowed the ground in front, so as to render the whole multitude of the enemy unable to act. At the dawn of the 16th, he made his last disposition for battle. His front line was drawn up in two divisions, of which the right was commanded by colonel Webster, and the left was headed by lord Rawdon*. A second line was formed for a reserve, and in the rear the cavalry were disposed, being ready either to charge or pursue, as circumstances might require. The artillery was divided between the two lines, to second and support their respective efforts: the Americans formed their troops also into two lines. The opposite armies being thus marshalled, colonel Webster and lord Rawdon began the charge with such impetuosity as quickly to throw the provincial line into confusion; rallying, however, they made a very gallant resistance, and the second British line advancing, the enemy were entirely broken, and the cavalry completed their route.

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Battle of
Camden.Victory of
the British
troops.

* This young nobleman, the eldest son of the earl of Moira, who possessed the advantages of high birth and ample fortune, accomplishments to grace the court, abilities to inform the cabinet, to convince and delight the senate, with taste and learning to charm and instruct the polished and literary circles of the metropolis, or to enjoy the calm recesses of rural life; when his country's cause was at stake, sacrificed ease, however elegant, refined, or rationally employed, to the generous love of glory, and the imperious duties of patriotism: combined genius and heroism soon raised him to high command.

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The judgment of the general in planning, his promptitude in executing, and his coolness and self-possession during the whole of the engagement, were the themes of universal admiration and applause. The victory was decisive; the broken and scattered enemy were pursued as far as Hanging-rock, about twenty miles from the field of battle; all their artillery, amounting to seven or eight brass field-pieces, with two thousand stand of arms, and their military waggon, were taken; about nine hundred were killed, and a thousand captured; the general baron de Kall, second in command, was mortally wounded and made prisoner. Lord Cornwallis had no sooner overthrown the enemy, than he prepared to render his success as beneficial as possible to the cause. Sumpter, an American general, had annoyed the royalists, by cutting off or capturing detached parties, and intercepting convoys. The British commander, with great prudence, resolved, before he pursued his victory by marching into North Carolina, to rid the southern province of this troublesome enemy; he accordingly, on the very evening of the battle of Camden, gave directions to that gallant and enterprising officer colonel Tarleton, to attempt the interception of Sumpter. The American commander, as soon as he heard of the fate of his countrymen, retreated with great dispatch, and having proceeded so far as to apprehend no danger of being overtaken, he halted to refresh his fatigued troops. Tarleton having received his general's orders, executed them with the utmost quickness: on the 10th of August he came up with the Americans, and before they had time

Atchievements of
colonel
Tarleton.

time to assemble, entered their camp, and cut them off from their arms and artillery. Being thus surprised, the provincials were all killed, taken, or dispersed, and the whole of their stores, ammunition, baggage, artillery, and one thousand stand of arms, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

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The discomfiture of general Gates's army, and the defeat and dispersion of Sumpter's corps so soon after, crushed the provincial force in the south: lord Cornwallis now waited only for supplies from Charlestown, before he proceeded to North Carolina. Until provisions for the army arrived, he resumed the consideration of civil affairs. Finding that many of the Americans, after swearing allegiance to the British government, on the approach of Gates had revolted, he thought it prudent and necessary to restrain perfidy, and prevent future defection, by wholesome severity towards the most active and forward in treachery and violation of their oaths. The estates of all who after having professed obedience to Great Britain had joined the enemy, were sequestered; but in this confiscation, separating their innocent families from the traitorous delinquents, he allowed from the property a liberal proportion for the maintenance of their wives and children. Instant death was denounced against those who, after having taken protections from the British government, should be found in arms for the Americans. On the 8th of September, his lordship marched towards North Carolina, and as he passed through the most populous and hostile parts of the province,

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vince, he sent colonel Tarleton and major Fergusson to scour the country to his right and left. Having arrived at Charlotteburgh, and judging that place from its intermediate position between Camden and Salisbury, a favourable situation for farther advances, he prepared to establish a post.

Account of
major Fergusson.

While he was making the proper dispositions for this purpose, the commanders of his detachments were proceeding in their respective expeditions. Of these the most signal in its efforts, though fatal in its event, was the last enterprise of the gallant and meritorious Fergusson. This gentleman had already displayed that combination of intrepid heroism, inventive genius, and sound judgment, which constitute the valiant soldier and the able commander. The son of an eminent Scottish judge*, and nephew of a nobleman† of great literary talents, he sought fame by a different direction of equally vigorous and brilliant powers. In early youth he entered the army, and while a subaltern of eighteen, in the German war was distinguished by a courage as cool as it was determined, his principal object being to become beneficial by professional skill and effort. The interval of peace he employed, by improving himself in military knowledge and science. When

* James Fergusson of Pitfour, lord of session and justiciary.

† Patrick Murray, lord Elibank, deemed by Robertson, Fergusson, Hume, and cotemporary sages, in genius and erudition equal to the authors of the Scottish Augustan age.

the disputes between Britain and her colonies was verging to a civil war, the boasted skill of the Americans in the use of the rifle was exhibited as an object of terror to the British troops. These rumours operated on the genius of Fergusson, and his invention produced a new species of the rifle, which he could load at the breech without using the rammer, or turning the muzzle away from the enemy, and with such quickness of repetition as to fire seven times in a minute. The riflemen might meanwhile be prostrate on the ground, and protected from the shot of the enemy by the smallest eminence, either natural or artificial. Fergusson displayed his contrivance to the satisfaction of lord Townshend, master of the ordnance, and other military men. When the war commenced, his regiment not being ordered for warlike service, he was extremely anxious to be actively employed for his king and country. He was accordingly introduced to the commander in chief, and appointed to command a corps drafted from regular regiments, and to discipline them for the practice of his new invention. At the battle of Brandywine he presented the first specimen of the use of his riflemen *, and obtained great praise for his skill and successful efforts. In the following year, he was employed in several of the detached expeditions, which unimportant as they proved in result, yet as we have seen called forth a great degree of British valour and ability ; and particularly distinguished himself in the incurfive war on the North River, in 1779. Fergusson being engaged in the expedition

* See account of the battle at Brandywine, vol. ii. of this history, chap. xix.

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to Charlestown, was of very signal importance to the besieging army, and is mentioned with great praises by sir Henry Clinton*. After the reduction of that place, when Cornwallis was attempting by justice and mildness to restore harmony between the province and the mother-country, he called for the assistance of Fergusson. To the valour, enterprize, and invention which were so important in war, Fergusson was known to add the benignant dispositions and conciliating manners which generate good-will and cement friendship in situations of peace. Among the propositions of Cornwallis for the security and tranquillity of the recovered colony, one scheme was to arm the well-affected for their own defence. Fergusson, now a lieutenant-colonel in America, was entrusted with the charge of marshalling the militia throughout a wide extent of country. Under his direction and conduct, a militia at once numerous and select was enrolled and disciplined. One of the great tests of clearness and vigour of understanding, is ready classification, either of things or men, according to the qualities which they possess and the purposes that they are fitted or intended to answer. Fergusson exercised his genius in devising a summary of the ordinary tactics and manual exercises, for the use of the militia: he had them divided in every district into two classes; one, of the young men, the single and unmarried, who should be ready to join the king's troops to repel any enemy that infested the province; another, of the aged and heads of families, who should be ready to unite in defending their

* See this Volume, p. 200.

own town, ships, habitations, and farms. In this progress among them, he soon gained their confidence, by the attention which he paid to the interests of the well-affected, and even by his humanity to the families of those who were in arms against him. "We came not," he said, "to make war on women and children;" and gave them money to relieve their distresses. The movements of the Americans having compelled Cornwallis to proceed with great caution in his northern expedition, the genius and rapid efforts of Fergusson were required for protecting and facilitating the march of the army, and a plan of collateral operations was devised for that purpose. In the execution of their schemes, he had advanced as far as Ninety-six, about two hundred miles from Charlestown; and with his usual vigour and success was acting against different bodies of the colonists that still disputed the possession of the country, when intelligence arrived from colonel Brown, commander of the king's forces in Upper Georgia, that a corps of rebels under colonel Clarke had made an attempt upon Augusta, and being repulsed, was retreating by the back-settlements of Carolina. To this information colonel Brown added, that he himself meant to hang on the rear of the enemy, and that if Fergusson would cut across his route, he might be intercepted, and his party dispersed. This service seemed to be perfectly consistent with the purpose of his expedition, and did not give time to wait for fresh orders from lord Cornwallis; Fergusson yielded to his usual ardour, and pushed with his detachment, composed of a few regulars

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and militia, into Tryon country. In the mean time, numerous bodies of back-settlers west of the Alleghany mountains were in arms, some of them intending to seize upon the presents intended for the Creek and Cherokee Indians, which they understood were but slightly guarded at Augusta; others had assembled, upon the alarm of enemies likely to visit them from South Carolina. These meeting with colonel Clarke, secured his retreat, and made it expedient for Brown to desist from his pursuit, and return to his station at Augusta; while Fergusson, having no intelligence of Brown's retreat, still continued the march, which was undertaken at his request. As he was continuing his route, a numerous, fierce, and unexpected enemy suddenly sprung up in the woods and wilds. The inhabitants of the Alleghany mountains assembled without noise or warning, under the conduct of six or seven of their militia colonels, to the number of sixteen hundred daring, well-mounted, and excellent horsemen. Discovering these enemies as he crossed King's Mountain, Fergusson took the best position for receiving them that the ground would permit. But his men, neither covered by horse nor artillery, and being likewise dismayed and astonished at finding themselves so unexpectedly surrounded and attacked on every side by the cavalry of the mountains, were not capable of withstanding the impetuosity of their charge. Already a hundred and fifty of his soldiers were killed upon the spot, and a greater number was wounded. Still, however, the unconquerable spirit of this gallant officer refused to surrender. He repulsed a succession of attacks from every quarter,

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until

until he received a mortal wound. By the fall of major Fergusson, his men were entirely disheartened: animated by his brave example, they had hitherto preserved their courage under all disadvantages. In the resources of his fertile genius they deservedly placed the utmost confidence, and with him perished every hope of success. Under such circumstances, the second in command, judging all farther resistance to be vain, offered to surrender, and sued for quarter.

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From the ability and exertions of colonel Fergusson, very great advantages had been expected; and had he not been surprised and cut off, there is no doubt that every expectation would have been fully gratified. By his unfortunate fall, and the slaughter, captivity, or dispersion of his whole corps, the plan of the expedition into North Carolina was entirely deranged. The western frontiers of South Carolina were now exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers, and it became necessary for lord Cornwallis to fall back for their protection, and wait for a reinforcement before he could proceed farther upon his expedition. On the 14th of October he began his march to South Carolina: his lordship and his army met with very great difficulties and hardships; their provisions were so nearly exhausted that the soldiers were limited as to quantity, with hardly any means of cooking*; the country was overflowed with incessant rains, they had no tents, and could rarely find a dry spot to kindle a fire: but the soldiers bore their hardships

* Stedman, vol. ii. p. 229.

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without repining, as they knew their officers and generals fared no better than themselves. His lordship himself was taken ill ; but nevertheless preserved his vigour of mind, and arrived on the 29th of October with his army at Wymesborough, to wait for fresh reinforcements from sir Henry Clinton. Meanwhile the mountaineers had dispersed, but the north-east part of the province was infested by the depredations of an enterprising partisan of the name of Marion.

Affairs at
New York.

In the northern part of America, operations and events were of much less importance, than in the south. The force left for the security of New York, appeared adequate to the defence of that city at the departure of Clinton; but the extraordinary rigour of the winter soon after exposed the British garrison to an unforeseen danger. One of the chief causes of the safety of New York was its insulated situation, which gave full effect to our naval superiority. The uncommon intenseness of the frost during the winter of 1779-80, deprived it of this protection. By the middle of January, the North River was so completely covered with thick ice, that the largest army, with the heaviest artillery and baggage, might have passed on it with ease. In other quarters, towards the country, New York was no less accessible, whilst its communication with the sea was entirely cut off. In this perilous situation, the veteran general Knyphausen took such precautionary measures as prudence dictated ; the seamen were landed from the ships and transports, and formed into companies ; the inhabitants were embodied, officered, and took their routine of duty with

with the regular garrison. They were deprived of those supplies which a communication by water would have afforded, and in particular suffered so severely for want of fuel, that it became necessary to break up some old transports, and to pull down some uninhabited wooden houses, to supply their present necessities. Fortunately for the British garrison, Washington's army was in no condition to profit by the accessibility of New York; it had been greatly weakened by detachments that were sent to the relief of Charlestown, was in extreme want of provisions and other necessaries, and from that cause seized with the spirit of discontent almost rising to mutiny. No attempt was made on the British garrison, except to straiten its quarters, and to intercept convoys. In February, major Matthews having defeated a party of Americans posted at King's Bridge to interrupt the communication of the garrison with the country, opened the way for more liberal supplies. The spring advanced, and thawing the ice, restored New York to its insular situation; and the British commander, exempted from the necessity of attending to defence, made dispositions for offensive measures. Informed of the prevalence of a mutinous spirit in the American army, and imputing to disaffection what really arose from distress, on that supposition hoping for the co-operation of the Americans, he attempted to establish the royal standard in the Jerseys; but he soon found that the American foldiers, though they repined at their difficulties, persevered in their inveteracy; and finding that, opposed by the provincials, his troops could obtain no footing in that

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country,

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country, he recalled them to New York. Such was the state of affairs when general Clinton returned from Charlestown, on the 23d of June. General Washington, expecting the speedy arrival of a French armament, confined his operations to desultory and detached excursions. On the 10th of July, the expected reinforcement reached Rhode Island: it consisted of seven ships of the line, some frigates, and a great number of transports, having on board six thousand troops. The fleet was commanded by de Ternay, and the troops by Rochambeau: in order to prevent discussions of rank in command, and to obviate every difficulty that might arise from the junction of the French troops with the American army, a commission was sent to general Washington, appointing him a lieutenant-general of France, and commander of the forces now sent. So powerful a reinforcement revived the drooping spirits of the Americans, and invigorated their exertions to recruit their own army. The French squadron being superior to that of Arbuthnot, the British commander thought it prudent to act on the defensive; but six ships of the line arriving from England, they prepared for an expedition to Rhode Island, in order to act offensively against the French. Meanwhile Washington having his army strongly reinforced, hastened across the North River, and approached King's Bridge. So unexpected a movement obliged sir Henry Clinton to abandon the expedition against Rhode Island, and return with the troops for the protection of New York, leaving admiral Arbuthnot to block up the French fleet at sea.

sea. Washington expected the count de Guichen with a fleet of twenty ships of the line from the the West Indies, and entertained sanguine hopes that the whole combined force would overpower Clinton and Arbuthnot, and wrest New York from the hands of the British: to concert measures for this design, he left his army, and repaired to the French commanders at Rhode Island.

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While Washington was absent for this purpose, a scheme was formed for delivering to sir Henry Clinton the strong post of West Point in the highlands upon the North River, the possession of which would have nearly cut off all communication between the northern and middle colonies. The author of this project was the celebrated general Arnold. This officer, after the campaign in the Jerseys, had been appointed commander of the American garrison that occupied Philadelphia: there he had lived so luxuriously and splendidly, as to disgust the Quakers, who were the principal inhabitants of that city, and to displease the congress, by a conduct so totally inconsistent with the austerity of republicans beset with danger; he lived also so profusely as far to outgo his stated income. To supply his deficiencies he took shares in privateers, and embarked in other speculations; but his various projects proved unsuccessful. He made considerable claims on the public, but when his accounts were examined by commissioners, a great part of his demand was refused. He appealed to the congress, which gave judgment that the inspectors of his claims had allowed him too much. Seeing the embarrassment of his affairs, his creditors became extremely importunate.

Defection of
general
Arnold.

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Character,
enterprize,
and fate of
major
André.

nate. Such a situation galled the proud and irritable temper of Arnold; who, giving vent to his resentment, and recapitulating his services, complained in strong and indignant terms of the ingratitude of congress. Provoked at the freedom and severity of his expostulation, that body appointed a court martial, to examine into his conduct as commander of Philadelphia. He was sentenced to a general reprehension, and also a reprimand from Washington, whom he deemed his personal enemy. From this time Arnold appears to have formed a design of betraying the interests which he professed to support, and joining the British; but to have suspended the execution until an opportunity should offer, of materially injuring the cause which he was about to desert, and serving the power he was about to join. The interval of Washington's absence appeared to him a favourable opportunity for delivering an important post to Clinton. He accordingly opened a correspondence with the British general; and as he required a confidential agent to be sent, major André, aid-du-camp to sir Henry Clinton, and adjutant-general of the British army, undertook to confer with him, and bring the negotiation to a conclusion. This was a gentleman of very great merit, and rising fast to a high character in the army. Though open and honourable, yet sensible that, in war, stratagem is no less necessary than military prowess, he could find nothing in the employment assigned him which was inconsistent with the character of a gallant soldier. Perceiving that very momentous advantage might result to his country from the success of the scheme, he was by loyalty and patriotism stimulated

stimulated to undertake its execution. Able and ingenious, he was conscious that he was well fitted to promote its success. The Vulture sloop of war had been stationed so near general Arnold's post, as to facilitate private communication without exciting suspicion. On the 21st of September, André went on board the sloop, and was at night conveyed in a boat to the beach without the lines, where he met with general Arnold. Day-light approaching before the business was finally adjusted, André was told that it would be necessary to conduct him to a safe place, where he should lie concealed during the day, and return at night on board the sloop. The retreat to which he was brought was, against his intentions and without his knowledge, within the American lines. Here Arnold delivered to him various papers concerning the state of the forces, and other matters, for the information of Clinton, to shew that general the most expeditions and effectual means of getting the American army into his power. The outlines of the project were, that Arnold should make such a disposition of the wing of the army under his command, as would enable sir Henry Clinton completely to surprise their strong posts and batteries, and throw the troops so entirely into his hands, that they must inevitably either lay down their arms, or be cut to pieces. Besides the immediate possession of these strong holds, and the cutting off so great a part of the enemy's best force without loss or difficulty, the consequences would have reached much farther, for the remainder of Washington's army would then have been laid open in such a manner to the joint exertion of the British

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tish forces by land and water, that nothing less than slaughter, dispersion, and final ruin, could have been the result. With respect to the Americans, such a stroke, it was conceived, could not have been recovered: independent of the loss of artillery, magazines, and stores, a destruction of their whole disciplined force, and of most if not all of their best officers, must have been immediately fatal. While André was with Arnold, the Vulture had shifted her position, in consequence of an attack from some artillery on shore, and was gone down nearer to New York; thence it being impracticable for André to return in the same way that he had come, he was obliged to proceed by land. Involved in such circumstances without any fault of his own, necessity compelled him to employ deception for his extrication. Hitherto he had worn his regimentals; now dressing himself in a plain suit, he received a passport, under the name of John Anderson, by which he on horseback passed the outposts. Conceiving himself in perfect safety, he was well advanced on his return, when three militia-men meeting him on the road, suddenly seized the bridle, and interrogated him whence he came. Confused at so unexpected an encounter, he answered *from below*: he immediately recollected his mistake, but too late; the suspicions of his interrogators were roused, and they insisted on searching him. He offered his purse and watch, and promised very high rewards if they would suffer him to depart; but all was unavailing. The generous André, now regardless of his own fate, had no anxiety but to save Arnold from the certain destruction that awaited

awaited him when the contents of the papers should be made known to the Americans. This object he effected by a dexterous stratagem: producing his passport from that general, he desired that he might be informed of his seizure, and that he himself should be detained in custody until Arnold's orders were known. The captors complying with this request, a message was sent to Arnold, which, announcing the detention of John Anderson, induced him, as André desired and expected, to seek safety by flight. He escaped, got on board the Vulture, and repaired to New York. André being informed that Arnold was out of reach of the Americans, avowed himself under his proper name and character. Washington having now returned, André wrote to him, detailing the circumstances of the case. Disregarding every danger, his only concern was to prove that he had conducted himself as became a man of honour, and had no intention to be within the American lines, nor to act as a spy; that he was merely the agent of a negotiation, in which neither he nor his employer had practised treachery, or done any thing inconsistent with the laws of war. He had gone upon public business under a flag of truce, dressed in his uniform, to confer with the commander of that post; and had, without his knowledge, been brought within the American lines. His subsequent disguise had been the result of necessity, not of choice. Washington appointed a board of general officers to take cognizance of the case; and before these gentlemen André made an explanation, similar in substance to that which his letter to Washington had contained, but much more copious in detail. His
enemies

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enemies heard with admiration a defence, which with a magnanimous indifference to life admitted the fact, but with a generous regard to reputation vindicated the motives. The American board, however, confining themselves to the literal and simple fact of his being in disguise within the American lines, instead of taking into consideration all the concomitant circumstances, doomed the gallant André to suffer death as a spy. The only evidence of the fact was André's own admission: not only humanity but justice required, that his own evidence, if allowed such weight against him, should also be allowed in his favour; and that his declaration of pure intentions ought to be considered, as well as his acknowledgment of an act contrary to the laws of war. At New York, all ranks, from a sentinel to the commander in chief, felt the most poignant concern at the situation of the unfortunate captive, whom they respected and admired as an officer, and loved and esteemed as a man. Sir Henry Clinton employed every effort to save so valuable a life: he opened a correspondence with Washington by means of a flag of truce, and urged every motive which justice, policy, and humanity could suggest, to induce a remission of the sentence. Finding his letters ineffectual, he sent out general Robertson with a flag, to confer upon the subject with any officers that should be appointed by general Washington. An interview took place between general Robertson and general Green, who had been president of the court-martial; but all efforts to save the unfortunate André were unavailing. André, finding his doom unavoidable, wrote a most pathetic letter, praying

praying that he might not die the death of a common malefactor, but by a mode more befitting a foldier. Even this small boon was refused to a generous enemy, by the inexorable rigour of stern republicanifm. On the 22d of October, the ill-fated hero met his death, with a compofure, ferenity, and fortitude, worthy of confcious innocence fuffering unmerited punifhment.

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Thus fell the gallant André, lofing his life for loyalty and patriotically endeavouring to ferve his king and country. If criminality is to be eftimated by intention, he was put to death without any proofs of guilty defign, and with the ftrongeft prefumptions of innocence. Such relentless inhuman rigour could anfwer no purpofe of policy, as it certainly neither enhanced the character, nor promoted the intereft, of the Americans; it was evidently the effect of revenge, and of revenge foiled in its principal object. André fuffered for the defection of Arnold. Had that general been caught, and undergone the punifhment due to treachery, the impartial reader would not perhaps have blamed the fentence, and might have confidered that as juftice to a traitorous friend, which he muft reprobate as cruelty to a fair and generous foe*.

The death of André, which Wafhington could have eafily prevented, will certainly in future ages be regarded as a dark fpot in the bright character of the American general. Arnold publifhed a declaration of his motives for leaving the fervice of America, confifting chiefly of inveftives againft his

* Stedman, vol. ii. p. 252.

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late associates, which, whether true or false, had, coming from him, the less weight, that the character of the Americans, now the object of his reprobation, was identically the same as before when the object of his panegyric. Winter now approaching, and the count de Guichen not having arrived from the West Indies, both parties, after concluding an agreement for the exchange of prisoners, retired into quarters. For the prevention of Guichen's arrival in North America, we are to find the causes in the transactions of the West Indies.

West Indies.

Arrival of
Rodney.

Sir George Rodney having, as we have seen, left Gibraltar in February, and sailed for the West Indies, had arrived at St. Lucia, and taken the command of the fleet upon the Leeward island station by the latter end of March. Just previous to his arrival, M. de Guichen, with twenty-five ships of the line, and eight frigates, all full of troops, had paraded for several days before that island, with a view either of surprising or of overwhelming the British force by their great superiority. The good disposition of the troops made by general Vaughan, and of the ships by rear-admiral Parker, however, frustrated their design. Sir George Rodney, with twenty ships of the line, and the Centurion of fifty guns, followed the French fleet into Martinique, and offered them battle; but the enemy, notwithstanding the superiority of their numbers, would not venture to engage. To entice the enemy to leave the harbour, the British admiral retired to Gros Islet Bay in St. Lucia, leaving swift sailing frigates to watch their motions, and convey to him intelligence. On the

16th

16th of April, Guichen failed with his fleet; the following day Rodney came in sight of the enemy late in the evening, and found them disposed to avoid an engagement. He watched them with such vigilance as to prevent their escape. The next morning, the French admiral made very masterly dispositions for avoiding an engagement: this the British commander counteracted with equal nautical skill and professional ability, which at last rendered a battle unavoidable.

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His skill
draws the
enemy to
battle.

In forming the line of battle, the long established mode was, when fleets were nearly equal in number, to oppose ship to ship, by which means superior force and seamanship prevailed, without any extraordinary efforts of naval ability or conduct. Rodney possessed not only that professional experience, guided by which brave men fight in the way in which brave men have fought before, but a comprehensive genius, which could adopt measures to existing cases, and leave precedent when novelty tended more effectually to secure the object. The enemy being considerably superior in number, he proposed not to attack the whole at once, but with all his force to bear down on a part of theirs, so that by mastering one division, he might easily overpower the rest*. For that purpose he directed

Established
mode of
forming the
naval line.

Rodney
adopts a new
plan of at-
tack, by
breaking the
enemy's
line.

* The examiner of the naval tactics which Rodney introduced, and which he himself in the last war, and others in the present, have practised with such terrible effect and glorious success, will see that it proceeded on the same principle that regulated the military tactics formed and exercised by the illustrious Frederic; and which produced the systems and movements of the Macedonian Philip, and his preceptor Epaminondas. The

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Some cap-
tains mis-
conceiving
his inten-
tion, discon-
cert the
execution.

The event
is there re
undecisive.

Partial con-
flicts.

directed his van to attack the hindmost ships of the enemy's centre, and the remainder of his fleet the rear. He also made a general signal to his ships to lie close to the enemy, and take example by the admiral. His fleet being in the proper position for engaging the enemy, according to the plan which he had arranged, he made the signal for every ship to attack her opposite, in the enemy's line. The commander of his van-most ship, a gentleman thoroughly experienced in the precedented mode of tactics, misconceived the admiral's meaning, and supposed his orders to be to steer towards the van-most ship of the enemy. This misapprehension communicating itself to the succeeding ships, tended to disconcert the masterly design of the admiral. His orders were not fully regarded in another particular: he had given, and had been obliged to repeat his signal, for lying close to the enemy. Several ships of his fleet kept at so great a distance, as not to second and support the admiral. The admiral's own ship, however, and some others, did very great execution; but the deviation from his orders, both as to plan and nearness, prevented a decisive issue to an engagement, for, and in which the commander had used every effort of design and execution which could lead to victory.

The French fleet was beaten from the scene of action: Rodney pursued them as soon as the crip-

battle of Leuctra was gained by the masterly skill of the Theban hero directing his whole force on a part of the enemy's, with such disposition and compactness as to BREAK THEIR LINE. See description of the battle of Leuctra, Gillies's History of Greece, vol. iii. p. 368.

pled

pled state of the ships that had engaged according to his orders, and the arrival of others in their proper position, permitted. Such dispatch was used to repair the damaged ships, that on the 20th they again descried the enemy, but not in sufficient time to prevent them from taking refuge under Guadeloupe. In the beginning of May, the French fleet again failed; and on the 10th, it was seen by the British a few leagues to windward. The enemy having the advantage of the wind, were able either to hazard or to avoid an engagement at pleasure, but chose the latter alternative. Rodney endeavoured to gain the lee-gage, but was not able to succeed. By feigning flight, on the 15th, he had almost drawn the enemy to battle; but after a partial cannonade between the extreme ships of the respective fleets, the enemy retired without a general battle. On the 19th, admiral Rodney endeavoured to turn the fleet of the enemy; and from his movements both parties became so entangled as to render a conflict unavoidable between the British van and the enemy's rear. The enemy having suffered considerable loss, bore away to Martinique. Rodney repaired to Carlisle Bay in Barbadoes, to refit his shattered ships. In these conflicts the French evinced themselves considerably improved in naval warfare, and our ships were much damaged in the repeated encounters; but the very object of their improved attack manifested conscious inferiority. Their chief purpose was to aim at our rigging, and thereby avoid

CLOSE FIGHT, WHICH UNIFORM EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT EVERY OPPONENT OF THE ENGLISH NAVY TO SHUN, IF THEY WOULD AVOID

The enemy much superior in number, will not venture a close fight.

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DESTRUCTION. Spain sent a considerable naval force to join her ally in the West Indies ; and thus recruited, the Bourbon fleet amounted to thirty-six ships of the line, a force that apparently must be able to overwhelm the British West Indies ; but this ostensible accession of strength proved eventual weakness : the Spanish troops were too much crowded on board their transports : that circumstance, co-operating with the length of the voyage, the change of climate and diet, and above all, their peculiar laziness and want of cleanliness, the whole of those combined causes generated a mortal and contagious distemper, which first infecting their own seamen, at length spread, though not entirely with so fatal an effect, through the French fleet and land forces. The pestilential disease still continuing, prevented the French from profiting by their fleet. The Spanish admiral proceeded to the westward, and, having parted with the French at St. Domingo, went on to the Havannah. Besides the infectious disorder, there appeared to be a want of concert between the armaments of the two allies, which very greatly obstructed their schemes for annoying Britain. Part of the French plan of operations had been, after the expected reduction of the British power in the West Indies by the combined forces, that their fleet should proceed to New York, and in conjunction with the Americans and the French ships and army who were there before, should capture New York, and drive the British from America. But after the first of these vast projects had failed, Guichen considering his former disappointments, the present state of his army, of his

The enemy disappointed in the chief objects of the campaign.

his ships and men, found the expedition utterly impracticable, and proceeded directly to Europe. Rodney, aware of the original design, and on the departure of Guichen conceiving that he was bound for New York, sailed himself for the same place, where he thought his assistance would be so much wanted; but finding his services not necessary in that quarter, he returned in the close of the year to St. Lucia. Besides the operations between the fleets of the belligerent powers during this campaign, various conflicts took place among single ships, both in Europe and the West Indies, which did signal honour to the courage and skill of both parties, but in the result of every action manifested the superiority of Britain upon her own element.

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CHAP. XXVI.

Proceedings against the rioters.—Lord Loughborough's charge to the grand jury—difference of opinion on the construction of Edward III.'s treason statute—legal authorities not altogether conformable to statutory definition—literal and free interpreters of statutes—lord Loughborough follows high authorities.—No grounds for the charge of rigorous severity against the rioters.—Political effects of the riots.—General election—contest for Westminster—Mr. Fox is chosen on the 10th of October, which thenceforward is consecrated to anniversary celebration.—Continental affairs—the character of Joseph opens—he aspires at the possession of Bavaria—is supported by Frederic.—Hostilities between Prussia and Austria—are terminated by the peace of Teschen.—Continental powers are jealous of British commercial and naval greatness.—Conduct of Russia—armed neutrality—real objects of.—State and interest of Holland—Holland favours the revolted colonies—remonstrances of Britain.—Discovery of a treaty between the Dutch and the Americans—rupture with Holland—the Dutch are the aggressors.—Meeting of Parliament—choice of a speaker—King's speech.—Mr. Fox's plan of attack against ministers—he begins with charges against lord Sandwich—his motion concerning the appointment of sir Hugh Palliser.—Mr. Burke resumes his plan of æconomical reform.—Beginnings of lord Chatham's second son, Mr. William Pitt.—The celebrated comic poet, Sheridan, turns his extraordinary talents to politics.—India affairs are extensively considered in parliament—two committees of inquiry are appointed—one has for its chairman Mr. Henry Dundas.—Questions for future deliberation respecting India, proposed by lord North.—Petitions from counties for redress of grievances.—Different opinions of Messrs. Fox and Burke on the marriage law.—

Supplies

Supplies—Extravagant terms of the noted loan of twelve millions.—Lord North, incorrupt himself, permits wasteful corruption in others—inefficacy, in arduous situations, of talents and benevolent dispositions, without firmness of resolution.—Session rises.

Two internal subjects principally attracted the public attention during the recess of 1780; the trial of the rioters, and the general election. Persons accused of tumults committed within the county of Middlesex and the city of London, were arraigned at Hicks's Hall; and bills being found for felony, either in robbery or arson, they were tried at the Old Bailey. The judge had not thought it necessary, in addressing the grand jury, to be peculiarly minute in explaining the law applicable to crimes which came so frequently under their consideration; and though well adapted to his view of the subject, the charge delivered no doctrines that particularly deserve historical record. Eighty-five persons being indicted, forty-three were acquitted, and forty-two capitally convicted; but of the condemned, twelve obtained mercy*.

For trying persons alleged to have committed outrages in the county of Surry, a special commission was appointed to sit at St. Margaret's Hill in the Borough; and the first nominee was Alexander Wedderburn, who was recently promoted to be lord chief justice of the common pleas, and called to the house of peers by the title of lord Loughborough. The persons here presented were accused

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Proceedings
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rioters.

Lord
Lough-
borough's
charge to
the grand
jury.

* See Annual Register, 1780; Appendix to Chronicle, p. 271—277.

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Difference
of opinion
on the con-
struction of
Edward
III.'s trea-
son statute.

of treason, and the judge delivered to the grand jury a charge, which the magnitude of the crime imputed, the doctrines promulgated, the high character of the speaker, and the splendid oratory of this exertion, combined in very strongly impressing on the public attention.

The learned reader must know that a very material difference subsists between the law of treason, as it is expressed by the statute of Edward III. on the one hand, and on the other interpreted by lawyers and judges*. The two chief species contained in the celebrated law of Edward are, to compass or intend the king's death, or to levy war against his person and government. But lawyers, partly desirous of paying court to the sovereign, and partly convinced that such narrow limitations of legal definition may often screen enormous guilt, had introduced a greater latitude. They observed, that if a man should enter into a conspiracy for rebellion, fix a correspondence with foreign powers for that purpose, or even plot the overthrow of the existing constitution, if he was detected, and no rebellion or insurrection ensued, by the letter of this statute he could not be convicted of treason. To prevent this inconvenience, they had commonly laid their indictment for intending the death of the king, and had produced the intention of rebellion as a proof of the other intention, and thus confounded the two species of treason, which the statute had accurately distinguished†; whereas the law had made only one kind

* See Blackstone, vol. iv. p. 74—93.

† Most of these observations are either extracted from, or suggested by, Hume's account of the trial of lord Russell.

of *intentional treason*, a purpose to put the king to death; the lawyers had made two, a design to levy war or rebel. It was frequently alleged, that by such an interpretation, lawyers and judges assuming to themselves a legislative authority, which is not vested in them by the constitution of their country, exercised it in extending penal law, and rendering designs capital that were not legally criminal. The object of this constructive interpretation was no doubt so far laudable; in estimating criminality, they proposed to take into the account moral depravity and political mischief, and to provide against new devices of flagitious ingenuity; but, on the other hand, the admission of such constructions might be abused to the most oppressive and tyrannical purposes *. There were always in Rome †, and have been and are in England, two classes of interpreters of law, the literal and the free; or, in the language of professional men, the arguers from law and from equity ‡. Persons early instructed in the civil law have more frequently belonged to the latter class than the former. This was the case with lord Loughborough, who has, on all great questions, shewn himself a liberal rather than a literal inter-

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Legal authorities not altogether conformable to statutory definition.

Literal and free interpreters of statutes.

* The danger of departure from established law, to punish even the most atrocious culprits, is perhaps nowhere more ably exhibited, than in Cæsar's speech on the discovery of Catiline's conspiracy, as presented by Sallust.

† See Gibbon's account of the Sabinians and Proculeians, in his view of the Justinian code. Vol. vi.

‡ In the parting view of the illustrious Mansfield, I endeavour to state the separate and comparative advantages and disadvantages of these two modes of interpretation.

preter.

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Lord
Lough-
borough fol-
lows high
authorities.

preter. He in this charge proceeded according to the practice of lawyers, and opinions of judges; and on this sanction he supported the constructive doctrine, instead of the precise definition, of legislature. Arguing on the *authority* of Fortescue, sir Matthew Hale, and other luminaries of judicial history, he stated, that every insurrection which, in the judgment of the law, is intended against the person of the king, be it to dethrone * or imprison him, or to oblige him to alter his measures of government, or to remove evil counsellors from about him, amounts to levying war within the statute, whether attended with the pomp and circumstances of open war or not; and every conspiracy to levy war for these purposes, though not treason within the clause of levying war, is yet an overt act within the other clause of compassing the king's death. Some lawyers contended, that it was not consistent with legal propriety to rest opinions on the authority of the judges, when they contravened an express statute; and that the substitution of a judge's opinion for the enactment of a legislative assembly, was changing judges into lawgivers.

The judge did not escape without censure for the doctrines which his address contained; and persons who hastily examined his conduct, deemed him severe and sanguinary; but for that blame just grounds are not to be found either in his charge or proceedings. Whether it be constitutionally right that treason is to be ascertained by judicial interpretation, it is historically true that such has been the

* See charge, Annual Register, 1780, p. 281.

mode usually adopted by the most reputed judges on criminal trials: lord Loughborough therefore merely applied the rules and followed the example of his eminent predecessors. As the insurrection had been very atrocious, severe punishment was a requisite sacrifice to justice, order, and tranquillity; but so far was the judge from the superfluous rigour which was imputed to him, that he recommended to mercy such of the guilty as had extenuating circumstances in their favour. It may be farther observed, that whether the construction of the judge concerning the guilt of a conspiracy to levy war were or were not just, no one was condemned who had not been found guilty of actual insurrection and rebellion against the king and government. His constructive treason therefore produced no effects to the accused, which would not have arisen from the most rigid interpretation. Forty-three were tried, of whom twenty-six were found guilty, and the rest acquitted*.

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No grounds
for the
charge of
rigorous se-
verity
against the
rioters.

The riots, which were thus effectually suppressed, really strengthened administration: the scenes of enormity which were exhibited in the metropolis struck men with horror, and by a natural, though an erroneous effect, inspired a general dread of popular meetings, however legal or peaceable. These dispositions reached to the country meetings, petitions, and associations, and consequently to all applications for redress of grievance, and schemes for a reform in parliament.

Political
effects of
the riots.

The capture of Charlestown, of which the news arrived soon after the riots, tended to erase the

* See Annual Register, 1780, p. 285—287.

memory

memory of past disappointments in the war, and to revive the sanguine hopes of the speedy subjugation of the colonies. The victory of Rodney, which had opened the naval campaign, succeeded by the stationary inaction of the French and Spanish fleets in Europe, joined to the little achievements of their mighty force in the West Indies, gratified the national pride, and cherished the hopes that the house of Bourbon would severely pay for the temerity of the attempt to wrest from Britain the dominion of the sea. Many who formerly reprobated the war, and condemned the measures and principles in which it originated, forgot their disapprobation when they saw or thought that it was likely to have a prosperous issue; and the influence and authority of the crown were more spread, and better fixed than they had been for several years. In this state of things, and disposition of the people, ministers conceived the season peculiarly favourable to a new election. The parliament had already sitted six years, and if it continued to the seventh, at the expiration of that time circumstances might be by no means so auspicious. Having resolved on the measure, they gave no intimation of their intention until they thought it ripe for execution; but their plan being matured, on the 1st of September a proclamation was issued for dissolving the parliament. Besides the prevalence of a spirit so favourable to the ministerial party, there was another circumstance which tended to promote their success in the new election: various members of opposition, tired with long disappointment, began to consider their efforts useless, and determined to decline

decline being candidates for again sitting in the legislature. From these different causes, the election of 1780 afforded much fewer disputes than any which had taken place from the beginning of the reign. Among the most warmly contested was the city of Westminster, for which two candidates contended, lord Lincoln and Mr. Fox, and the great champion of opposition was elected by a numerous majority on the 10th of October, a day ever since deemed worthy of anniversary celebration by those politicians who identify the conduct of the orator with the principles of the British constitution, and consecrated to remembrance as an epoch in the history of modern whiggism triumphant. The new parliament was summoned to meet on the 31st of October; but before our narrative follows its deliberations, it must exhibit a short view of foreign interests and affairs, which, relating to Britain, very early occupied its attention and deliberation.

Though Britain, during the American war, had less connection with continental powers than at any other period of this last century, yet her contest with her colonies was a subject of the most interesting concern to the neighbouring nations. During a great part of the war, tranquillity prevailing in the northern and eastern states of Europe allowed them an almost undivided attention to the contest between Britain and America. The only interruption of the peace of Germany and Russia arose from a dispute about the electorate of Bavaria. The king of Prussia had in a few years improved his share of the Polish spoils to the highest advantage, and greatly meliorated the condition of recent as well

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Contest for
Westminster.

Mr. Fox is
chosen on
the 10th of
October,
which
thenceforward
is
consecrated
to anniversary
celebration.

Continental
affairs.

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The charac-
ter of Joseph
opens ;

he aspires at
the posses-
sion of
Bavaria.

as hereditary subjects: indeed, though his warmest admirers must admit that his ambition often violated justice in acquiring dominions, his severest enemies must allow that he rendered his acquisitions more beneficial, and their inhabitants happier, than he found them when they became subjects to his government. The emperor Joseph was equally ambitious, but much inferior in wisdom of plan, or in steadiness of execution. On the death of the elector of Bavaria, this prince attempted to revive obsolete claims to the reversion of his dominions; and in the beginning of 1778, actually marched troops towards Munich, and dispossessed the elector Palatine, the real heir, of the whole of that territory. Frederic justly considered this step as a violation of the Germanic constitution, and determined without delay to resist such an encroachment. He knew, that notwithstanding his alliance with Austria, cemented by the recent alliance of the royal families, France would regard with jealousy such an accession to the emperor's power; but engaged in schemes of maritime aggrandisement, would not employ any effectual efforts. He himself therefore saw that the protection of Bavaria must rest chiefly on his policy and power; and before he would interrupt the improvement of his kingdom by drawing the sword, he tried negotiation, opened a correspondence with the emperor, and professed a disposition to listen to his claims, to learn their extent and validity, and to admit them if they should prove well-founded. The Austrian pretensions were so very weak, that even the ability of Kaunitz could not render them plausible, or prevent easy refutation.

refutation. The empress-queen, evidently convinced that her son's demands were ill-founded, and that assertion would be impolitic, was pacifically disposed, but her son was resolved to maintain them by force, and encouraged in his obstinacy by his ministers, who chose to worship the rising sun. Frederic engaged the empress Catharine to second his opposition to the aspiring views of Joseph, and convinced her that it was the interest of the Russians to hinder the emperor, who was only entitled to be the first prince in Germany, from governing that great empire with despotic authority. Finding that the Austrian prince had collected large bodies of troops from Italy, Flanders, and Hungary, into Bohemia, he drew a no less formidable force to his own frontiers. Joseph, in a letter, endeavoured to justify his claims by arguments; but soon finding, in the answer of Frederic, that he had to contend with a logician very superior to himself, he was mortified, and sent an angry reply, expressing his disposition to take a lesson from Frederic in the art of war*. To this effusion of galled pride, the hero sent a wise, temperate, and firm answer†; and finding hostilities unavoidable, with his usual ability he formed a comprehensive scheme to annoy his antagonist in various quarters; with his usual rapidity he commenced his operations, and established a decisive superiority over the arms of Joseph. Catharine meanwhile, with a view to obtain influence in the empire by espousing its cause, sent a

Is opposed
by Frederic.

Hostilities
between
Prussia and
Austria,

* Gillies's Frederic, p. 476.

† Frederic's manifesto, State Papers, July 7, 1778.

considerable

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are termi-
nated by
the peace
of Teschen.

Continental
powers are
jealous of
British com-
mercial and
naval great-
ness.

considerable body of troops to join Frederic. Maria Theresa strongly urged her son to peace; but having conceived the hopes of rekindling the war between Turkey and Russia, and thus having himself only to contend with Prussia, he would listen to no proposals. At last, however, in spring 1779, learning that Russia had entirely composed her differences with Turkey, and was preparing a great army to co-operate with Frederic, he became accessible to pacific propositions. A congress was held at Teschen: Frederic, equally triumphant in the cabinet as in the field, without ostentatiously dictating, actually framed the terms. Joseph acknowledged the right of the elector Palatine as heir to the sovereignty of Bavaria, renounced his claims, and virtually confessed that he had been disturbing the peace of Germany without tenable grounds. Commercial advantages in the last century transcended not only the experience, but even the imagination of former times, and rendered the formation and extension of mercantile establishments, and a marine force, one of the primary objects of policy with European nations: a natural, though not a wise concomitant of the desire of such a source of benefit, is jealousy of a state that possesses it in a superior degree. Envy the pre-eminence of Britain, maritime potentates anxiously beheld the progress of a quarrel by which they conceived her naval superiority must be considerably impaired. The most powerful of these states formed the vain hope of dispossessing Britain of her supremacy, and with that view, by unprovoked aggression, involved us in war. The other naval states did not
openly

openly combine with the house of Bourbon, but secretly favoured both those nations, and the colonies revolted from Britain. Deeply indebted to this country for maritime support and accommodation during her war with Turkey, Russia had been among the first to act hostilely herself, and encourage others to enmity.

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Conduct of
Russia.

By the received law of nations in modern Europe, when a war broke out between any of the powers, on the one hand neutral states were not to be interrupted in their general trade with the belligerent parties, but on the other hand were to convey to neither, naval or military stores. Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland, entered into an association for promoting a scheme which altered the public law concerning the right of neutral states to convey warlike stores. This was the treaty concluded at Copenhagen on the 19th of July 1780, under the name of the ARMED NEUTRALITY*. The professed object of this combination was to protect, by an armed force, every species of neutral trade. The treaty set out with declaring, that the contracting parties entertained the most cordial amity for the several belligerent powers, and professed the strictest impartiality. It declared, they would carry on no contraband trade; but narrowed this definition into literal interpretation, and designedly omitted the spirit and object. They founded the asserted privilege of carrying what commodities they chose to the warring powers, not upon the EXISTING LAW OF NATIONS, but upon *natural right*: neutral ships were

Armed
neutrality.

* See State Papers, July 1780.

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not to be searched without a material and well-grounded cause, of which the contracting parties were to be the sole judges. The associated powers engaged to protect neutral trade, and reciprocally, severally, and jointly, to maintain a force for that purpose. They declared, that an injury done to any one of them as a neutral trader, should be accounted an injury done to all; and that, both jointly and severally, unless it was redressed, they should issue orders for reprisals. The association was to continue during the war, and should notify to the belligerent powers the existence of the treaty, its objects, and their resolutions to employ force for its support. Every person acquainted with the maritime force and situation of the several nations, clearly perceived that this plan, ostensibly impartial, was really meant to injure Britain. As the principal articles of warlike, especially naval, stores, came from Norway and the Baltic, England, from her local situation, had the means of intercepting such commodities much more than her southern enemies; she had also a superior maritime force; a much greater proportion of naval stores could be carried into Britain in her ships, than to Spain, or even to France, in their ships: the conveyance of stores, therefore, in neutral bottoms, was a greater advantage to her enemies than to Britain; they would reap the beneficial fruits from the neutral association, while Britain would lose in the same proportion that her enemies gained. The contracting parties could not but see that this compact was injurious to Britain, therefore their intentions must have been inimical.

Britain

Britain considered this convention as a proof of unfriendly dispositions and designs in all the parties; but a variety of other causes combined to aggravate her displeasure towards the United Provinces. That the reader may have a complete view of the dispute between Great Britain and Holland, it is necessary to consider, not only recent, but distant portions of history, as the proximate causes of quarrel originated in very remote circumstances. From the first establishment of the Dutch commonwealth, two parties existed, which alternately predominated. The one consisted of the adherents of the princes of Orange, the first champions and successful vindicators of their rights and liberties; the other, of those who either by birth inherited, or by fortune or merit acquired, rank and influence. Gratitude for recent delivery was about to confer on William I. prince of Orange, a limited hereditary sovereignty, when assassination prevented the design from being accomplished*. Maurice, his son and successor in the stadtholdership, being then a boy, could not profit by the occasion while it lasted, and notwithstanding the splendor of his subsequent exploits, the services which he performed, and the prosperity and glory to which he raised the republic, was never able to recover the opportunity. He and his successors naturally looked back with regret to that sovereignty which they had almost obtained, and endeavoured to enlarge to the utmost extent their official powers as stadtholders. The principal citizens, on the other hand, who had grown up along with

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State and
interest of
Holland.

* See Watson's History of Philip II.

the fortune of the state, not only opposed their designs, but endeavoured to limit their power, which they considered as becoming dangerous to public liberty, and inimical to the principles of the constitution. The bitterness of such a contest soon effaced from the minds of the nobles all the signal benefits which had been conferred on the state by the successive heroes of the Orange family. Great generals seemed no longer necessary in a season of peace and prosperity; nor did it follow, because it had hitherto so proved, that every prince of Orange was to be an illustrious captain; therefore the aristocratic party proposed the total abolition of the office of stadtholder, and the distribution of its various powers among their own leaders. Such was the origin and foundation of that republican faction which is distinguished in the history of Holland, and which, under various denominations, subsisted from the days of prince Maurice and Barneveldt to modern times. It was the constant and obvious policy of France, to maintain her influence in the councils of Holland, and, at the same time, to restrain and weaken, as much as possible, the power and political activity of the republic. The princes of the house of Orange were generally inimical to the views of France, and linked by blood and alliance with Britain. This state of affairs occasioned a permanent enmity between France and the house of Orange, and naturally produced an intimate connection between that monarch and the aristocratic party. France diligently cultivated her influence with the anti-stadtholderian faction of Holland. William III. succeeded to the stadtholderate

holderate when he was only a child ; and during his minority, the nobles, under the name of the Louvestein party, became extremely powerful, and being headed by the celebrated de Wit, were able totally to abolish the office : the violent irruption of Louis XIV. into Holland, however, prompted the States to raise to power the party and individual most inimical to France, and most able to repress the unjustifiable ambition of that aspiring neighbour. The delivery of his country by William III. ; the very high character and great influence of that prince, which was increased by his power from the time he became king of England ; the resentment of the Dutch against the French, and their alarm from the ambitious politics of Louis ; repressed the party which derived its chief support from Gallic policy. On the death of William III. the stadtholderate became extinct, the States not chusing to renew it in favour of that part of his family which had succeeded to the title of Orange as well as to the principal part of his inheritance. Union, however, of views and interests with England, in repelling the ambition of the French, and opposing the succession of a Bourbon prince to the throne of Spain, rendered the states-general no less inimical to Louis, and friendly to England and the emperor, than they had been when William governed both countries ; and the ability and address of Marlborough procured such personal influence with the states-general, that the French party was not able to defeat the measures of the grand alliance. Towards the end of queen Anne's reign, the Dutch were closely connected with the antigallican party in

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England; but during the peace, which lasted for so many years after the treaty of Utrecht, the French party in Holland appears to have gained ground. The co-operation of the Dutch with Britain and the house of Austria in the war which commenced in 1740, was very inefficient; and to the influence of the partisans of France may, in a great degree, be ascribed that failure of Dutch exertion, which prevented the extraordinary efforts of the British troops from being victorious at Fontenoy. The same want of cordiality in the cause was obvious in other actions, particularly in the battle of Laffelt. In consequence of their victories, the French penetrated into Dutch Flanders, and prepared to descend on the island of Zealand. Perceiving the danger which impended from the progress of the French, the Dutch determined to have recourse to a measure that had formerly saved them from ruin, and to declare the prince of Orange stadtholder. In the year 1748, the office was renewed in full plenitude of power in favour of the late prince of Orange, with the additional security of being rendered hereditary not only in the male, but the female lines of his family. This settlement appeared to cut off entirely the views of the adverse faction; but though depressed, or at least withheld from any means of political exertion, they were still potent and numerous, and only waited for a favourable opportunity which should operate as a signal for union and exertion. The prince of Orange dying in 1751, and leaving his son, the present prince, a child of three years old, the long minority much weakened the influence of the stadtholderian party, and the Gallican

Gallican faction became powerful. At the commencement of the seven years war, Britain claimed six thousand men, who had been promised as auxiliaries by a defensive treaty; but the Dutch refused to comply, and became the carriers of contraband goods with impunity, until Mr. Pitt was raised to the head of affairs. They even privately co-operated with our French enemies, while a French party openly avowed its enmity to this country. The French interest having rapidly advanced during the non-age, continued to be very powerful even during the administration, of the present prince, and used every artifice to inflame the jealousy of the Dutch against the great naval power, and particularly the increase of commerce, which Britain had attained.

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Such was the state of parties and sentiments in Holland, when war broke out between this country and her colonies. From the beginning of the contest the Dutch had secretly favoured America, but became more open in assistance as the fortune of England began to decline, and as her enemies multiplied. Holland protected Amercain ships when laden with plunder taken from British merchants, and even suffered a provincial pirate to take refuge in the Texel; in the East and West Indies she assisted our enemies, and in America our revolted subjects. In Europe, contrary both to the general law of nations and to specific treaties, she conveyed warlike stores to our enemies. Holland had sent an armed force to prevent our ships from acting, according to the law of nations, and the spirit and letter of particular treaties, in searching ships which

Holland
favours the
revolted
colonies.

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Remon-
strances of
Britain,

should be suspected of carrying warlike stores. Her admiral, count Byland, fired upon British ships that were sent to examine her vessels in the manner prescribed by the treaty of 1674; and various amicable representations and remonstrances were made by Great Britain* to the states-general, but without effect. Great Britain, when pressed by so many enemies, demanded the succours which were stipulated by different treaties, and especially that of 1716†, but obtained no satisfactory answer. All these circumstances, combined with her accession to the armed neutrality, not only indicated, but manifested, in the republic, a disposition hostile to her natural ally and most liberal benefactor.

Discovery
of a treaty
between the
Dutch and
Americans.

An incident now happened, which discovered to what extent the enmity of this pretended friend was carried: Mr. Henry Laurens, late president of the American congress, had been appointed ambassador to Holland, and was captured in a Philadelphia ship in the beginning of September on the banks of Newfoundland by a British frigate. The package which contained his papers had been thrown overboard, but its bulk preventing it from suddenly sinking, it was saved by the boldness and dexterity of a British seaman, and most of the papers recovered from the effects of the water. Mr. Laurens being brought to England, was committed on a charge of high treason. When interrogated, he made no answer to any question of importance, but his papers were

* See the correspondence between British ministers, the ambassador sir Joseph Yorke, and the Dutch; State Papers, 1780.

† See Chalmers's Collection of Treaties.

suffi-

sufficiently explicit. A treaty of amity and commerce between America and Holland appeared to have been in agitation for more than two years, and Mr. Laurens was to bring the same to a conclusion. The negotiators on the side of Holland, were M. Van Burkel, pensionary and counsellor to the city of Amsterdam (an officer of great weight and power), with other members of the registry, assisted by some great commercial houses of that city. Sir Joseph Yorke, the British ambassador at the Hague, was immediately instructed how to proceed: he accordingly expostulated in strong memorials to the states-general, and represented to them the clandestine correspondence which Amsterdam had long been carrying on with rebels against a sovereign to whom the republic was joined in the strictest ties of friendship. He therefore demanded, in the name of the king his master, not only a formal disavowal of so irregular a conduct, but insisted on speedy satisfaction adequate to the offence, and the punishment of the pensionary Van Burkel and his accomplices, as disturbers of the public, and violators of the rights of nations. To this remonstrance an immediate answer not having been given, its substance was repeated in still stronger terms, accompanied by the following intimation: "His majesty, by the complaints made through his ambassador, has placed the punishment and the reparation in the hands of your High Mightinesses; and it will not be until the last extremity, that is to say, in case of a denial of justice, or of silence, which must be interpreted as a refusal, that the

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Rupture
with Hol-
land.Dutch are
the aggres-
sors.Meeting of
parliament.

the king will take them upon himself*.” Here one nation complained to another of an injury received from subjects of that other, and demanded public disavowal and punishment of the aggressors. It rested with the other nation, either to disavow the act and punish the actors, or by refusing satisfaction justify what had been done. The latter alternative the states-general chose; they did not answer the memorial, and thus compelled the British sovereign to seek by force that redress which peaceable application could not obtain. Sir Joseph Yorke received orders to withdraw from the Hague; and that step was followed, before the close of the year, by a declaration of hostilities against Holland. Manifestoes followed from both parties; but, on considering the whole circumstances of the case, an impartial reader can entertain no doubt that the Dutch were the aggressors.

On the 31st of October parliament met, and, before they proceeded to business, ministers proposed a new speaker. Sir Fletcher Norton had frequently thwarted and censured administration, and given umbrage to the court party; but he excited the greatest displeasure in 1777, when, on presenting bills for paying the civil list debts, he made a speech enlarging on the magnificence of the commons, and recommending œconomy in the management of their gift. Ministers considering such an adviser as by no means proper for being speaker of the house, embraced the earliest possible opportunity of dismissing him from that office. With this view

* See State Papers from Nov. 18, to Dec. 29, 1780, relative to a rupture with Holland.

they

they praised the firmness, prudence, and diligence, with which he had discharged his laborious duties, but lamented that his ardent zeal and indefatigable efforts had very much impaired his constitution: actuated by a grateful regard to the ease and health of so valuable a member, the house, according to ministers, ought to relieve him from so troublesome an employment, and substitute a more able-bodied man to preside over the commons. They therefore recommended Mr. Cornwall, as a gentleman in every other respect qualified for the speaker's chair, and also possessing sufficient corporal vigour. Opposition expressed the greatest contempt for the ridiculous farce that ministers were acting, and imputed the proposed dismissal to ministerial resentment on account of sir Fletcher's upright conduct. On a division, the nomination of Mr. Cornwall was carried by a majority of 203 to 134.

Choice
of a new
speaker.

His majesty's speech, after expressing confidence in the loyal and patriotic dispositions and wishes of his people, described the mighty efforts of France and Spain to support the American rebellion, and destroy the commerce and reduce the power of Britain; the glorious efforts and brilliant successes of the British arms by sea and land, which had frustrated the designs, and disappointed the expectations of our enemies; and his confidence, that continuance in these exertions would bring the war to a happy conclusion. After the repetition of reiterated arguments against the origin and conduct of the American war, opposition descended to the events of the last campaign, and insisted that,
though

The king's
speech.

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though the victories were most splendidly honourable to the British forces, they did not, in the result, advance the ministerial object of conquering America. They had often predicted, that certain successful operations would terminate the war; but as often as the predictions were made, they were falsified. British soldiers and sailors fought valiantly in the year 1780, as they had always fought; they had gained battles and taken towns, but to what purpose? Could any man say, that the conquest of America was less distant, than when we had driven our colonies to revolt?

Mr. Fox's
plan of at-
tack against
ministers.

He begins
with charges
against lord
Sandwich.

Mr. Fox, resuming his usual function of accusing ministers, gave notice that he should after the holidays move, first, for the dismissal of the earl of Sandwich; and then for bringing him to condign punishment: that he should found the motions on two different causes; for advising his majesty to promote sir Hugh Palliser to the government of Greenwich hospital; and for the shameful neglect of the navy. Sir Hugh Palliser had not taken his seat as member for Huntingdon, when Mr. Fox intimated his intention of censuring his recent appointment; but being informed of this intimation, he speedily repaired to the house, in order personally to support his own cause. The 4th of December being the day appointed to take the navy estimates into consideration, it was presumed that Mr. Fox would embrace the opportunity of attacking the conduct and late appointment of Palliser; that gentleman therefore resolved to appear in vindication of his character. Mr. Fox commenced his attack: sir Hugh Palliser (he said) had been convicted of a

false

false and malicious accusation against his superior officer, and, on charges exhibited against himself, barely acquitted by a court-martial; nevertheless, he was promoted to a post of distinction and profit, which had heretofore been held by men of the first naval merit, and was intended as a retreat and reward to those who had essentially served their country. This appointment, he considered, as the highest insult that could be offered to the navy, and the greatest stigma that could be affixed to the service. He did not blame the person who accepted that place, but the first lord of the admiralty, whose conduct in it ought to be the subject of their inquiry. Lord North answered Mr. Fox, and displayed one of his chief parliamentary excellencies, ability and readiness of reply. The appointment of sir Hugh Palliser (he said) was not the act of the first lord of the admiralty alone, but of the other ministers also. Mr. Fox's principal objection to the nomination was, that the court-martial upon admiral Keppel had imputed unworthy motives to his accuser. Therein that tribunal had exceeded its jurisdiction; the court did not sit on admiral Palliser, but on admiral Keppel. They had not heard Palliser in his own defence, but pronounced an injurious opinion, without establishing its grounds. The second objection of Mr. Fox was, that sir Hugh Palliser had been barely acquitted; but his interpretation was confuted by the sentence itself, and especially the following words: "The court having taken the whole of the evidence into consideration, both on the part of the prosecution as well as in favour of the prisoner, were of opinion, that the conduct

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duct of sir Hugh Palliser, was so far from being reprehensible on the 27th and 28th of July, that in many parts it appeared exemplary and highly meritorious." Exemplary conduct meant such as was a proper example for other officers to follow, and a fit object for imitation. According to this natural and true construction of the sentence, the minister contended that sir Hugh Palliser was undoubtedly an object of requital; and after his conduct had been declared highly meritorious and exemplary, administration would have been criminally culpable if they had neglected to give a suitable reward. On the 6th of December the recess took place, and parliament did not again meet until the 25th of January. Papers respecting the rupture with Holland were laid before the houses. Ministers entered into a detailed vindication of their proceedings, to prove that the Dutch had violated both general neutrality and particular treaties; they contended, that as we had applied in vain for redress, hostilities were therefore unavoidable. Opposition members, with their usual ingenuity, endeavoured to demonstrate our enemy to be in the right, and the British government to be in the wrong; and for that purpose they contrasted the present system respecting continental connections, with the policy of former periods since the revolution. Ministers replied, that their object was the same as the purposes of William and Anne, to humble the house of Bourbon; but that the Dutch had, contrary to wisdom and their own interest, changed their measures, and, misled by a factious party, assisted their natural enemies against their natural friends. In answer to fanciful analogies,

analogies, taken from remote and dissimilar periods of history, and theories built upon these, they referred to the existing case, as proved by authentic documents, to evince that Holland was the aggressor, and by refusing satisfaction had forced Britain to go to war.

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On the 1st of February, Mr. Fox, in pursuance of his notice, moved, that the appointment of sir Hugh Palliser to be governor of Greenwich hospital, after he had been declared by a court-martial guilty of having preferred a malicious and ill-founded accusation against his commanding officer, was a measure totally subversive of the discipline, and derogatory to the honour, of the navy. He exhibited the whole detail of the proceedings by or concerning admirals Keppel and Palliser, with all their consequences, real and supposed, in one view, in order to support by his former arguments the present motion. Ministers having replied by repeating their former reasonings, offered an amendment destructive of the original proposition, and carried it in the affirmative by a majority of two hundred and fourteen to one hundred and forty-nine.

His motion concerning the appointment of sir Hugh Palliser,

While Mr. Fox was thus eagerly employed in attacking ministry, Mr. Burke again attempted to introduce his plan for financial reform; and from the new parliament professed to expect a support which he had not experienced from the former. The bill itself not being changed since the former year, and the genius of Mr. Burke having then brought forward every important argument that could be adduced, the substance of his reasoning on the present occasion was necessarily similar to his arguments in the preceding session: the bill was
thrown

Mr. Burke resumes his plan of economical reform.

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Beginning
of lord
Chatham's
second son,
Mr. William
Pitt.

thrown out at the second reading, by a majority much smaller than for a long time had usually voted in favour of ministry.

The debate previous to this division is remarkable for a circumstance distinct from the intrinsic merits of the question; it called forward, for the first time in parliament, the genius of Mr. William Pitt, second son of the illustrious earl of Chatham. At the general election, this youth, in the twenty-second year of his age, entered parliament, while the expectations of all ranks and parties were aroused in his favour. It was publicly known that his illustrious father had conceived the highest opinion of his talents and acquirements. Lord Chatham had himself inspected the education of his children; and though immersed in public business, under the pressure of age and bodily infirmity, with anxious delight had tutored, formed, and directed the opening understanding of such a promising son. In every stage of his education, young Pitt impressed all those who knew him with admiration of his talents and acquirements. As he advanced in years, he had progressively risen in estimation, and was chiefly eminent for masculine strength and compass of intellectual powers, rapidly mastering the various departments of knowledge and science, studying as a scholar, comprehending and generalising as a philosopher; bold and original in conception, profound in research, indefatigable in application, he had a firmness of temper, which steadily pursued what he perceived to be right, and adhered to his own plans of conduct, undisturbed by the ridicule of frivolity, and unseduced by the allurements of vice. At the university,

university, he was deemed far superior to ordinary men, and as one destined to transcend his contemporaries as much in the highest deliberative and executive departments of public life, as he then surpassed them in the erudition and science of academic retirement. Some of his friends at Cambridge proposed that he should stand candidate for representing the university in parliament, but declining this honour unless unanimously offered, he was returned for Poole. In the speech which he now delivered, Mr. Pitt fully justified the anticipations of the public, and was considered from that time as an important accession to parliamentary ability. Although the young orator voted and spoke on the side of opposition, he did not connect himself with any of its members as a party, but, like his renowned father, he trusted entirely to himself, without seeking eminence through the collective influence of a combination. The same session brought another splendid addition to parliamentary genius: Mr. Sheridan, after far surpassing all contemporary writers, and indeed all of the eighteenth century, in comic poetry, first exhibited in the senate that strong, brilliant, and versatile genius, which had acquired the dramatic palm merely because its possessor had chosen that species of intellectual exercise.

The celebrated comic poet, Sheridan, turns his extraordinary talents to politics.

Sir Philip Jennings Clarke, notwithstanding his repeated defeats, resumed his design of excluding contractors from a seat in the house. A bill which he brought in for that purpose, was thrown out by a majority of one hundred and twenty to one hundred; and a bill proposed by Mr. Crewe, to restrain

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India affairs
are exten-
sively con-
sidered in
parliament.

revenue officers from voting at elections for members of parliament, met with a similar fate.

India affairs now came before the house : petitions were presented from the natives of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, complaining that the supreme court of judicature established by the act of 1773, had greatly exceeded its powers ; that it extended its jurisdiction to persons whom it was not the intention of the king and parliament to subject to its decrees ; that it had taken cognizance of matters both originally and pending the suit, the exclusive determination of which the petitioners humbly conceived it to have been the intention of the king and parliament to leave to other courts ; that the judges considered the criminal law of England as in force and binding upon the natives of Bengal, though utterly repugnant to the laws and customs by which they had formerly been governed. Petitions were presented to parliament by three classes, who were affected by what they conceived to be an unwarranted assumption of jurisdiction ; first, by the governor-general and council ; secondly, by the agents of the British subjects ; and thirdly, by the East India company. A select committee was, at the instance of general Smith, appointed to consider India affairs, and the proposer was nominated chairman. To this committee the petitions were referred : the investigation of their grounds produced a variety of information, which afterwards extended the objects of the inquiry to deliberative and executive acts, as well as judicative, and eventually laid the foundation of a very celebrated prosecution. All parties

parties appeared to agree, that in the imperfect state of their knowledge of facts it was proper to proceed with great caution and delicacy, yet on a summary review, the chief members of both sides appeared to think, that there were among the company's servants counteracting interests that very materially injured the value of India possessions. The select committee having been appointed in February, had already presented a long report, when intelligence arrived of such a state of affairs in the Carnatic, as induced the minister to propose a secret committee, for the purpose of inquiring into the general management of the state of affairs in India, including the farther investigation of the subjects suggested by the petitions. After some objections from opposition to the secrecy, the motion was carried, a committee was chosen from both sides of the house, and Mr. Henry Dundas appointed chairman. In consequence of the report of the secret committee, a bill was proposed by general Smith, for a new regulation of the supreme judicature in India, which, after some partial changes, was passed into a law.

The minister submitted various propositions to the house respecting Indian affairs, but rather as subjects of discussion than as measures for adoption. Of these the most important were, Whether it would be proper to throw the trade to India open; to grant a monopoly to another company; or to bestow a new charter on the present company, and reserve to the public a great share of their profits? Whether it would be proper for the crown to take the territorial possessions and revenues entirely into its own hands, or to leave them to the management of a

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Two committees of inquiry are appointed:

one has for its chairman Mr. Henry Dundas.

Questions for future deliberation respecting India, proposed by Lord North.

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mercantile company? These topics underwent a variety of discussion, but without producing any efficient resolution during the present session. As themes, however, of reflection and argument, they turned the attention of members to the contemplation of Indian affairs, and prepared them for understanding the nature and tendency of such plans as should be afterwards proposed. Lord North introduced a temporary and short bill, continuing the company's monopoly for a limited time, until a more permanent and comprehensive plan should be formed. By this bill the company was to pay four hundred and two thousand pounds to government, as a share of its past profits, and also an annual sum in future.

In the house of lords the duke of Bolton proposed an inquiry relative to the capture of the East and West India convoy, in the course of which much censure was passed on the general conduct of the navy; but his grace at length withdrew his motion. Although the riots had damped the spirit of association, yet some of the counties continued to associate for the purpose of procuring a redress of grievances, and appointed delegates to give support and efficacy to their acts. These, as acting for their constituents, having assembled, prepared a petition to the house of commons, stating the alleged grievances, and the desired redress. There were many who, admitting the existence of them, and the necessity of a remedy, yet totally disapproved of such a convention. The petition was therefore subscribed by three several delegates, in their individual and not their collective capacities.

When

Petitions
from coun-
ties for the
redress of
grievances.

When presented however to parliament, the powers that had been assumed by delegates were the chief subjects of animadversion by the opposers of the petition, which was rejected by a majority of two hundred and twelve to one hundred and thirty-five. The house of commons on this occasion shewed a jealous vigilance of an encroachment on the established constitution, by discountenancing a representative system which was formed by detached individuals, and unknown to the laws of the land.

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Near the close of the session an inconvenience that had arisen from the marriage-act 1751, produced the correction of a clause in that law. It had been enacted, that no marriage could be valid unless it was solemnized in a church or other place wherein the celebration of nuptials was lawful before the act. A pauper, who had been married in a chapel erected after that period, being sent with a large family to the parish wherein he conceived himself entitled to a settlement as a married man, was refused, on the ground that, not having complied with the terms of the statute, he was not a married man. An application was made to the court of king's bench; and the judges, though they lamented the hardness of the case, yet, in conformity to the statute, were under the necessity of justifying the recusants. Through the ignorance or inadvertency of the parties and the clergymen, many marriages were in the same predicament, and great numbers of innocent children, without any immoral conduct or intention on the part of their parents, were bastardised. Lord Beaucamp proposed an act of retrospective operation, legalising such marriages,

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Different
opinions of
Messrs. Fox
and Burke
on the mar-
riage-law.

and legitimating their issue. So humane and equitable a bill was unanimously and speedily passed. The consideration of this particular clause led many to take a view of the marriage-act in general; and among others Mr. Charles Fox, who, employing the arguments that had been used in opposition to the bill in 1751, and especially with distinguished ability by his father, proposed a total repeal of the law, and brought in a bill for that purpose: but it was rejected without a division. Mr. Fox on the occasion viewed the subject in a light rather democratical, considering the inclination of the contracting parties as the *sole* criterion of proper marriages. His friend Mr. Burke expressed a different opinion, and contended, that during the non-age of parties, the sanction of parents or other nearest relations was requisite in that act, the most important of their lives, as well as in others of less comparative moment. The marriage-act (he said) justly hit the medium between close and mischievous restraint, and the former laxity which had been the cause of such disorders, and so many just complaints. Concerning the control to which natural liberty should be subjected for the sake of general expediency, these two illustrious friends manifested on this incidental occasion, a diversity of opinion, which was not much regarded at the time, but from subsequent proceedings and events has been carefully noted by examiners of the series and system of their respective principles and conduct.

Supplies.

The pecuniary transactions of this year were subjects of the severest animadversion. The supplies were granted without opposition, though not without reproach

reproach of ministers, for the uselessness, through their misconduct, of the most lavish grants. Ninety-one thousand seamen were voted, and, including foreign troops, about eighty thousand landmen. The whole amount required for the public service was 22,458,337l. To provide so large a sum, besides the ordinary means, with the assistance of contributions from the bank and East India company, twelve millions were raised by a loan. The subscribers to this loan, for every hundred pounds contributed, obtained one hundred and fifty in annuities, after the rate of three per cent. per annum, and an additional twenty-five pounds in an annuity at four per cent. per annum; which rate of interest was to be continued until the annuity should be redeemed. 480,000l. were raised by a lottery, the tickets in which were distributed among the subscribers in the proportion of four tickets for every thousand pounds subscribed. By comparing the terms of this loan with the price of the several funds on which it was negotiated, it was immediately seen that subscribers had a gain of more than ten per cent. besides the current interest, and in fact the omnium bore an immediate premium of ten per cent. The bestowal of such very advantageous terms on the subscribers to the loan underwent a severe scrutiny. Mr. Fox inveighed against it, as, in the first place, a much less favourable bargain than might have been obtained. The minister had been offered money to the amount of thirty-eight millions, at five per cent. without any premium, and had chosen to borrow it at sixteen per cent. for the first year,

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Extravagant
terms of the
noted loan
for twelve
millions.

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making near six per cent. for ever*, and imposing an unnecessary annuity on this country, of near one hundred thousand pounds. Mr. Fox contended, in very forcible reasoning, that such was not the conduct of a competent and faithful steward; that the minister must either have been grossly ignorant, criminally negligent, or wilfully treacherous to his country. He could not be so ignorant as to suppose it was better to pay six per cent. than five; neither could it be imputed to negligence, because the subscribers were the minister's own particular friends. His favourite contractor, Mr. Atkinson,

* Average price of three per cents.	£.	s.	d.
was $58\frac{1}{2}$, therefore 150 was	87	15	0
Four per cents. at $72\frac{1}{2}$, 25 is	18	2	6
Lottery tickets at 12 l. 10 s. four for			
1000 l. is 50 l., for 100	5	0	0
	£. 110	17	6

The current interest was for each hundred pounds 4 l. 10 s. in the three per cents. 10 l. in the four, and 15 l. on the lottery tickets; so that the minister paid a premium of near eleven per cent. for borrowing at more than legal interest.

Interest of loan	-	-	5	5	0
Interest of premium	-	-	0	10	9
			5	15	9

15 s. 9 d. beyond legal interest on each 100 l.

100 l. 15 s. 9 d. 12,000,000 l. 94,500 l.

Thus an annuity of 94,500 l. is for ever paid by this country more than was necessary for the same sum of money, if lord North had made the best terms he could for the good of his country.

for

for one, had the disposal of three millions three hundred thousand, the immediate profit of which was three hundred and thirty thousand pounds. The other shares were also distributed among the minister's adherents. Mr. Fox proposed that the lists of both subscribers and proposers should be laid before the house. Lord North by no means consented to the application of this test; cautiously avoiding a detailed answer to Mr. Fox, he in general declared that he had made the best bargain he could, but opposed all inquiry into its circumstances. Hurtful, Mr. Fox observed, as the financial waste was to the pecuniary interest of the country, it was still more injurious to political, by feeding corruption already so enormous. Mr. Fox so completely discussed this subject, that though afterwards frequently debated both by the commons and the peers, no new facts or arguments were adduced.

The impartial historian cannot justify the public steward for so prodigal a waste of the public money; but must exhibit the twelve millions loan of 1781 as very inconsistent with the character of an able and upright minister. On the other hand, however, he will not hastily impute such donatives to personal corruption. The individual integrity of lord North has never been impeached; his bitterest political enemies never alleged that there was any defalcation of national treasure for his own use*; but what his own rectitude prevented in himself, his inattention suffered in others. With great talents, and mani-

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Lord North
incorrupt
himself, per-
mits waste-
ful corrup-
tion in
others.

* Personal enmity, the amiable character of this minister, has, I believe, never provoked.

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1781.
Inefficacy of
talents and
benevolent
dispositions,
without
firmness of
resolution, in
arduous
situations.

fold acquirements, of an acute understanding, and benevolent dispositions, the minister possessed a constitutional indolence, which, when mingled with good nature, often allows to friends and connections much more indulgence than the stern austerity of rigid morality would permit; and in gratifying the wishes, or promoting the interest of the objects of its attachment, frequently transcends the bounds of duty. From this source probably arose the largesses of a minister, than whom no one did more to serve his friends. At the same time, a considerable portion of his donatives must be imputed to political considerations, to the desire of extending his influence, and fortifying himself against the formidable host by which he was assailed.

Session rises.

On the 18th of July the session was closed with a speech from the throne, in which the king thanked his parliament for their exertions during so long and important a session. He expressed his satisfaction that, in the midst of the difficulties of so complicated and extensive a war, the ancient spirit of the British nation was not diminished. He approved highly of the consideration that had been bestowed on the affairs of India, and trusted the business would be resumed and completed at their next meeting. "Peace (he concluded) is the earnest wish of my heart, but I have too firm a reliance on the spirit and resources of the nation, and the powerful assistance of my parliament, and the protection of a just and all-ruling Providence, to accept in any terms and conditions, than such as may consist with the honour and dignity of my crown, and the permanent interest and security of my people."

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East Indies.—Hyder Ally invades the Carnatic—colonel Baillie defeats him, but is drawn into an ambuscade, overpowered by numbers, and destroyed.—Rapid progress of Hyder.—Consternation at Madras—alarm reaches Calcutta.—Sir Eyre Coote sent to command in the Carnatic—comparatively small army.—Plan of operations for 1781.—Successive victories over Hyder.—Coote restores the British affairs in the Carnatic.—Admiral Hughes destroys Hyder's shipping on the Malabar coast—reduces Dutch settlements.—Europe.—Plans of the house of Bourbon when reinforced by the Dutch.—French invade the island of Jersey—are at first successful, but finally repelled.—Blockade of Gibraltar—British fleet supplies the garrison with provisions—Spaniards resolve to attempt its reduction by storm—immense preparations for this purpose.—General Elliot.—Grand scheme for totally discomfiting the enemy—bold, masterly, and complete disposition—sally of November 27th—entirely destroys the enemy's preparations.—Darby endeavours to bring the enemy's fleet to battle, but in vain.—The combined fleet of forty-nine ships of the line sails to the Channel—British fleet of thirty ships keeps the sea.—The hostile armada, notwithstanding its superiority, will not venture an attack—retires to harbour.—British trade protected.—Admiral Kempenfelt intercepts a French convoy.—War with Holland.—Action off the Dogger-bank.—Commodore Johnstone's expedition to the Cape of Good Hope—though not entirely successful, captures several valuable prizes.—West Indies.—Tremendous hurricane in the Leeward Islands—in Jamaica—humane endeavours to alleviate the distresses.—Campaign opens.—Reduction of St. Eustatius.—Holland experiences the folly of going to war with Britain.—De Grasse arrives in the West Indies with a greater fleet than the British.—Admiral Hood, detached by Rodney, offers battle to the French—they will not venture a close engagement, but keep a running fight.

fight.—A French armament invades Tobago—small garrison there—character and gallant defence of governor Fergusson—his judicious and kind treatment of his negroes—their gratitude, fidelity, and valour—overpowered by numbers, yields by an honourable capitulation.—Rodney endeavours to meet de Grasse, who avoids an encounter.—Spaniards reduce West Florida.—Last efforts of Britain for the recovery of North America—general misinformation and false conclusions of ministers—magnify every transient success—sanguine hopes from the reduction of Carolina delusive.—Object and plan of the campaign 1781.—Lord Cornwallis begins his march.—Expedition of light troops—defeat of the enterprising and brave Tarleton—disadvantage to the British from this disaster.—Battle of Guilford—Cornwallis successful, but with considerable loss.—Operations of lord Rawdon in Carolina—enterprise, skill, and genius of that commander, but by great superiority of numbers is cut off from communication with Cornwallis—returns to Britain—is succeeded by colonel Stewart, who is obliged to act on the defensive.—Cornwallis enters Virginia—reaches Williamsburg—opposed by an American and French force—establishes himself at Gloucester, in expectation of co-operation from general Clinton.—French and American army near New York.—Washington projects to march against Cornwallis, without being followed by Clinton—dexterous stratagem by which he overreaches the British commander—with his army joins the forces in Virginia.—Cornwallis surrounded—expecting succours from Clinton resolves to defend himself to the last—skilful and gallant defence—a French fleet blocks up the river—our brave general still holds out—the garrison fast diminishes—a general assault prepared—finding himself totally unable to resist, lord Cornwallis at length surrenders.

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WE left Hyder Ally preparing to enter the Carnatic: for this purpose he had collected a mighty army. The force on the Madras establishment

ment amounted to about thirty thousand men, but was dispersed at great distances, either in quarters, garrison, or upon various detached services; part was employed on the Malabar coast, and a very valuable detachment was in the Guntoor circar, under the conduct of colonel Baillie. The presidency of Madras was not sufficiently impressed with a sense of the nature and extent of Hyder's designs, and by no means employed prudent precautions to secure passes, and fortify posts, to prevent his inroads. Hyder having made his way through the Ghauts, on the 22d of July 1780 advanced without opposition into the level country, with desolation and terror, while his son, Tippoo Saib, was sent to the northern circars. Hyder Ally besieged the city of Arcot, which its nabob defended in such a manner as to excite great suspicion of his fidelity. Tippoo Saib advanced with a great body of cavalry upon the northern circars, whilst at the opposite extremity different parties of the enemy were approaching to Madras and the borders of Tinivelly country. Sir Hector Monro, the British general, formed the design of compelling Hyder to raise the siege, and himself effecting a junction with Baillie's detachment, which was marching to the south. Hyder on the approach of Monro's army raised the siege, but occupied such a position as intercepted the communication between colonel Baillie and the main army. Baillie, meanwhile, with a force consisting of above two hundred Europeans and eighteen hundred Sepoys, encountered Tippoo Saib at the head of thirty thousand horse and eight thousand foot,

Hyder Ally
invades the
Carnatic,

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Baillie de-
feats him at
Perimbaucum;

but is
drawn into
an ambuscade.

Valour of
the British
troops.

foot, at a place called Perimbaucum*, where he made masterly dispositions to withstand the prodigious superiority of number. After a very severe action the British gained a complete victory, but for want of cavalry were unable to preserve their baggage. Baillie found that from the intervention of Hyder's army he could not make good a junction with general Monro, and at the same time that it would be impossible long to retain his present post for want of provisions. He sent intelligence of his situation to sir Hector; and colonel Fletcher was dispatched to his assistance, who, after narrowly escaping being betrayed by his guides, effected a junction with Baillie. Their detachments now prepared to force their way to the British army. Hyder pretended a resolution not to oppose them, and to change his position, but really formed an ambuscade round the road by which they were to pass; while a body of his cavalry, by various movements, diverted the attention of the English camp. On the 10th of September, Baillie's corps advanced into the toils, and were soon surrounded by forty thousand men, besides a corps of European artillery. Notwithstanding this surprise, the English leader made a masterly disposition and gallant resistance. The Myfore troops were giving way in the greatest consternation, and victory appeared to be in the hands of the British, when a fatal accident reversed the fortune of the day: the tumbrils which con-

* See Memoirs of the war in Asia, from 1780 to 1784, by Dr. William Thomson †.

† See Life of Dr. W. T. in Phillips's Public Characters for 1803.

tained

tained the ammunition suddenly blew up with two dreadful explosions in the centre of the British lines; one whole face of their column was entirely laid open, and their artillery overturned and destroyed. The destruction of men was great, but the total loss of ammunition was still more dreadful to the survivors. Tippoo Saib instantly seized the moment of advantage, and attacked the broken column with his cavalry; he was soon followed by the French corps, the first line of infantry, and entirely overpowered the sepoys in the British service, who, after displaying the most intrepid valour, were cut to pieces. Baillie himself being dangerously wounded, rallied his handful of Britons, formed a square, and his soldiers, without ammunition, fighting with their bayonets, repulsed the Asiatic host, until exhausted rather than conquered they fell, and were trampled by horses and elephants. Among the killed was the brave colonel Fletcher; colonel Baillie, and about two hundred Europeans, were taken prisoners, and exposed to every insult and cruelty that the ingenuity of barbarians could inflict, while nothing could exceed their sufferings but the magnanimous and indignant fortitude with which they were borne*. This disaster threw the presidency into great consternation and terror; they considered the Carnatic on the eve of being lost, and Madras itself in the greatest danger. Hyder soon resumed the siege of Arcot, took it by assault on the 3d of November, and, three days after, the citadel, though capable of a much longer defence if the nabob had been reso-

Overpow-
ered by
numbers.Alarm at
Madras;

* See narrative of the sufferings of the officers and men, Thomson's War in Asia, passim.

lutely

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reaches
Calcutta.Sir Eyre
Coote sent
to command
in the Car-
natic.Compara-
tively small
army,

lutely faithful. The successes of Hyder caused alarm even at Calcutta: the supreme council placed little reliance on the efforts of the Madras presidency, but having resolved to assist that settlement, and wishing to be assured of the proper application of their aid, they passed a resolution, intreating sir Eyre Coote, a member of their own body and commander in chief of the forces in India, to take the command of the army in the Carnatic. The governor-general exerted himself to reinforce the army destined to act against Hyder, and to provide money for paying and supplying the troops. It was concerted that general Coote should sail immediately for Madras, while admiral Hughes should direct his operations against the ports and shipping of Hyder on the Malabar coast. Sir Eyre Coote arrived at Madras at the close of the year 1780, where he found affairs in a more dismal situation than he had conceived: Hyder Ally had taken every measure which could occur to the most experienced general*, to distress the British, and to render himself formidable. His military conduct was supported by a degree of political address unequalled by any prince or leader that had yet appeared in Hindostan: his army was now augmented to more than a hundred thousand men, while the force of general Coote did not exceed seven thousand. On the conduct of the general, invigorating and directing this small band, depended the fate of the Carnatic, and probably of all British India.

* This is the substance of Coote's first letter from Madras to the India directory.

Encouraged

Encouraged by his victories, Hyder had besieged the fortresses of Vellore, Wandewash, Permacoil, and Chingleput. Having called a council of war, composed of sir Hector Monro, lord Macleod, and general Stuart, the commander in chief consulted them whether it would be better to relieve these garrisons, or proceed immediately against the enemy's army. The former alternative was unanimously adopted, and in a few weeks the British general obliged Hyder to raise all the sieges, reinforced and supplied the garrisons. The French inhabitants of Pondicherry, notwithstanding the generous treatment which they had received from the English, behaved with the most ungrateful perfidy; they admitted a garrison in the interests of Hyder, and collected a large store of provision, evidently intended to support a fleet and army which were expected from the Mauritius; but Coote effectually crushed this nefarious project, by taking away their arms, destroying the boats, and removing the provisions.

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Plan of operations for
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Successive
victories
of Coote
in the Carnatic.

These operations, though attended with success, so exhausted the army of Coote, originally small, as to render an immediate attack upon the army of Mysore extremely imprudent, unless it should prove absolutely necessary. Hyder, on the other hand, finding his foldiers discouraged by the late victories of their adversaries, did not deem it expedient to compel the British to an engagement; and during several months no conflicts of any importance took place between the armies. Hyder at length being strongly reinforced, made preparations for the siege of Trichinopoly. Sir Eyre Coote proposed to march with the army to Porto Novo, as well that

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he might frustrate the design of the enemy, as to repress his depredation on the side of Tanjore and the southern provinces. The British army was small, and very indifferently provided for the field, but the situation of affairs admitted but of one alternative, either southern India must be abandoned, or an effort must be made for its preservation; and this was one of the cases which have often occurred in British history, in which the most adventurous boldness was the wisest policy.

Impelled by these considerations, the British general, with a small but valiant band, on the 16th of June set out in quest of the Mysorean myriads, and arrived at Port Novo; thence he made an attempt on the fortress of Chillumbrum, but was obliged to retire: nevertheless, he resolved to persist in endeavouring to bring the enemy to battle, to which their commander was now much less indisposed than in the earlier part of the campaign. Hyder was so powerfully reinforced, that confident in his strength, and elated with the repulse of the English, he resolved to hazard an engagement, rather than relinquish his design on Trichinopoly and the adjacent provinces. Determined to fight, he advanced to meet the English army, and chose a very advantageous position within a short distance of Coote. One of the great difficulties of the English army was the impossibility of obtaining intelligence respecting the force and situation of the enemy. Clouds of Hyder's cavalry hovered round our camp, and overspread the country on all sides, farther than the eye could reach; therefore it was not only impracticable to send out a reconnoitring party, but even a single scout could not escape

escape detection. Several men were dispatched for intelligence, but none returned; and the British commander could procure no farther knowledge of the number and disposition of the enemy, than the short view from his own advanced posts admitted. Thus compelled to proceed in the dark, Coote could form no previous plan of action, but was obliged to trust entirely to his invention, which must instantaneously devise plans and expedients, according to the discoveries which he should make concerning the Myforeans. Such are perhaps the most trying circumstances in which a general can be placed; they demand not merely courage, nor even the habitual skill of professional experience framing customary plans for common situations; extrication and success were to depend on genius, which must form and adapt its combinations to a new case, with a correspondent self-possession of faculties, and promptitude of execution. These qualities the fate of the Carnatic required in the commander to whom it was entrusted, and they were found in sir Eyre Coote.

On the 1st of July, at five in the morning, the British drums beat to arms; at seven, the troops, consisting of seventeen hundred Europeans, and three thousand five hundred sepoy, marched out of the camp in two lines; the first being commanded by sir Hector Monro, and the second by general Stuart. This body of five thousand two hundred, with a proportionable quantity of artillery, advanced to meet an enemy of seventy thousand, with a powerful train, directed by European officers. On the right was the sea; and on the left, numerous bodies of the enemy's cavalry as before precluded intelli-

Battle of
Porto Novo.

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Able plan of
attack by
the British
general.Conduct and
valour of the
enemy.Complete
victory of
the British.Important
effects.

gence and observation. After an hour's march, our troops entered a plain, skirted by an eminence, on which the army of Hyder was posted, being flanked on both sides by strong batteries of artillery, and vigorously and skilfully fortified in front. The English general, from this position, saw that the success of his handful depended on the first impression; the design which he thence formed was to direct his efforts against a part, and cause a confusion which might extend to the rest of the army. With this view he narrowed his front, so arranged his men as to be nearly covered from the cannon of the enemy, and assailed their left wing diagonally: this prompt and happy movement decided the fortune of the day; attacked in such an unexpected manner, the Mysoresans were thrown into disorder. Hyder dexterously and speedily changed his front, in order to encounter the English with his whole force, and attempted at once to separate the British lines, and to surround them both. His dispositions for these purposes were masterly; but the respective efforts of Monro and Stuart, with the superintending conduct of Coote, proved invincible. The Mysoresans fought valiantly, but the British continuing to pursue the advantage which their first attack had produced, after an obstinate contest of seven hours, put the enemy completely to the route, and obtained a decisive victory. The battle of Porto Novo will ever be accounted an important epoch in the history of British India: it broke the spell which the defeat of colonel Baillie had formed, destroyed the awe that was attached to the name of Hyder Ally, and by its effects,

effects, both on the relative power and authority of the belligerent parties, may be considered as the salvation of India *. “So little,” says the historian of the war in Asia, “can human sagacity penetrate into the maze of future events, that the repulse at Chillumbrum, which seemed pregnant with danger, by encouraging Hyder to venture an engagement, changed the whole face of our affairs in the Carnatic.”

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Coote being soon reinforced by a body of troops from Bengal, reduced Passore, a place of considerable importance, and well-stored with provisions. Meanwhile Hyder, being joined by his son Tippoo with a fresh supply of troops, hazarded a second battle; but on the 27th of August, after displaying his usual skill and intrepidity, he was again defeated. Undismayed by these losses, he ventured a third engagement on the 27th of September, in which British prowess continued triumphant. He even afterwards manifested a wish for a fresh trial, but found his troops so disheartened as not to second his desire. He was now compelled to retreat into the interior country, to abandon the advantages of the former year, and to leave the English possessions in undoubted security. Such was the change effected by the ability and conduct of sir Eyre Coote in 1781 †.

Coote restores the British affairs in the Carnatic.

Meanwhile sir Edward Hughes by his naval efforts powerfully co-operated in annoying the enemies of England; he destroyed Hyder's shipping in his own ports, and thereby blasted in the bud his

Admiral Hughes destroys Hyder's fleet,

* See Thomson's War in Asia, p. 255—266.

† Annual Register, 1781.

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and reduces
the Dutch
settlements
on the Ma-
labar coast.

hopes of becoming a maritime power. Informed of the war with Holland, he immediately attacked the Dutch settlement of Negapatam, which was defended by five hundred Europeans, seven hundred Malays, four thousand five hundred sepoy, and two thousand three hundred of Hyder's troops. Admiral Hughes was in this expedition assisted by a land force under sir Hector Monro: their joint efforts reduced this place in three weeks, acquired a very considerable booty, and compelled Hyder to evacuate Tanjore. About the same time, the British factory in the island of Sumatra, with the assistance of captain Clements and a small squadron of ships, subdued all the Dutch settlements on the west coasts of the island.

Europe.—
Plans of the
house of
Bourbon
when rein-
forced by
the Dutch.

The French
invade the
island of
Jersey.

At first suc-
cessful;
but are
finally re-
pulsed.

In Europe, the Bourbon princes, reinforced by the Dutch, formed a comprehensive plan of operations; they proposed to subdue Jersey, to attack our naval armaments on our own coast, to invade Minorca, and accomplish the reduction of Gibraltar. In January, the baron de Rullecourt invaded the island of Jersey, and leaving a small garrison at Grouville, marched to St. Helier. Having besieged the avenues of the town, he surprised the guard in the dark, and possessed the market-place without noise; and at the break of day, the inhabitants were astonished to find themselves in the hands of the enemy. Major Corbet, deputy governor, with the magistrates and principal inhabitants, being brought prisoners to the court-house, the French commander wrote terms of capitulation, by which the island was to be surrendered to France, the troops to lay down their arms, and to be conveyed to England. The lieutenant-governor represented, that no act could have

have the smallest validity in his present situation, and that the officers and troops were too well informed of their duty to pay any regard to his acts while a prisoner; but his remonstrance was unavailing, Rullecourt was peremptory in his demand, and Corbet, under the impression of the moment, too precipitately signed the capitulation*. The French commander summoned Elizabeth castle to surrender on the prescribed terms; but this fortress was preserved by the conduct and fortitude of captains Aylward and Mulcaster, who having retired thither at the first alarm, prepared against a sudden attack, rejected the summons with great spirit, and peremptorily refused to pay the smallest regard to the capitulation, or to any orders which should be issued by the lieutenant-governor in his present circumstances. Meanwhile the alarm extended, and the nearest troops rushed with the utmost expedition towards the point of danger, and immediately formed on an eminence near the town, under the conduct of major Pierſon of the ninety-fifth regiment. Rullecourt required the British commander immediately to yield; the gallant officer replied, that if the French leader and troops did not within twenty minutes lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners of war, he should attack them the instant that period was expired. Pierſon made a very masterly disposition of his forces, and when the specified time was elapsed, began the conflict with such an union of impetuosity and skill as soon gained a decisive victory. The French general

* Annual Register, 1781.

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being mortally wounded, the next in command feeling the hopelessness of their situation, requested the lieutenant-governor to resume his authority, and to accept of their surrender as prisoners of war. The satisfaction arising from this victory was greatly diminished by the fall of the hero to whom it was owing; fighting at the head of conquering troops, the gallant Pierfon was killed in the twenty-fifth year of his age. The redoubt at Grouville was immediately attacked and retaken, and the whole of the French invading party was either killed or taken prisoners: thus ended the second attempt of France on the island of Jersey.

Blockade of
Gibraltar.

The blockade of Gibraltar continued, and notwithstanding the supply of provisions which had been brought by admiral Rodney in the preceding year, the garrison began to feel the distresses of restricted food: so early as October 1780, the governor had been obliged to deduct a quarter of a pound from each man's daily allowance of bread, and to confine the consumption of meat to a pound and a half a week, which, from being so long kept, was now scarcely eatable. The inhabitants were reduced to still greater difficulties: after the supply which the English fleet had brought, and even earlier, not a single vessel arrived with provisions or necessaries, either from the neighbouring shores of Barbary, or any of the more distant coasts of Africa; so that, with every other misfortune, they were at once cut off from that great and long-established source of a cheap and plentiful market, and reduced to depend entirely for relief on the casual arrival of a few small
Minorcan

Minorcan vessels, whose cargoes were insufficient, and prices immoderate *. To this distressing situation both the soldiers and inhabitants submitted, not only without murmur, but with universal cheerfulness. In such circumstances, the interest and honour of Britain required, that one of the first measures of the campaign should be the relief of Gibraltar; and early in spring, a great fleet, under the conduct of the admirals Darby, Digby, and sir J. Lockhart Ross, was fitted out for this service. The French and Spaniards boasted that they would defeat the execution of this design; thereby conceiving a vain hope of deterring Britain from the

* The following account, copied from the Annual Register of 1782, and with the usual accuracy of that valuable performance, clearly illustrates the distressed state of the garrison:—"Of the most common and indispensable necessities of life; bad ship-biscuit, full of worms, was sold at a shilling a pound; flour and beef, in not much better condition, at the same price; old dried pease at a third more; the worst salt, half dirt, the sweepings of ships' bottoms and store-houses, at eight pence; old Irish salt butter at half a crown; the worst sort of brown sugar brought the same price; and English farthing candles were sold at six-pence a piece.

"But fresh provisions bore still more exorbitant prices, even when the arrival of vessels from the Mediterranean opened a market: turkeys sold at three pounds twelve shillings a piece; sucking pigs at two guineas; ducks at half a guinea; and small hens sold at nine shillings a piece. A guinea was refused for a calf's pluck; and one pound seven shillings asked for an ox's head. To heighten every distress, the firing was so nearly exhausted as scarcely to afford a sufficiency for the most indispensable culinary purposes; so that all the linen of the town and garrison was washed in cold water, and worn without ironing. This want was severely felt in the wet season, which, notwithstanding the general warmth of the climate, is exceedingly cold at Gibraltar."

attempt.

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The British
fleet sup-
plies the
garrison
with provi-
sion.

attempt. The English fleet consisted of twenty-eight sail of the line. A French armament of twenty-six ships was ready at Brest, while thirty Spanish ships were parading in the bay of Cadiz. France was much more intent on her own designs of overpowering the British in America and the West Indies, and co-operating with the native powers of East, than on seconding the project of Spain against Gibraltar; instead of seeking a junction with the fleet of her allies, she sent her principal naval force, under count de Grasse, to the western world, and a strong squadron under Suffrein to the eastern. The British fleet left St. Helen's on the 13th of March, and were obliged to delay some days on the coast of Ireland, waiting for victuallers from Cork. It had also under its convoy the East and West India fleets: having conducted these merchantmen beyond the reach of the enemy's fleets, admiral Darby steered for Gibraltar with his naval force, and ninety-seven victuallers. On the 12th of April he arrived off Cadiz, where he saw the Spanish fleet lying at anchor, and evidently disposed to afford him no opposition. The British admiral having sent forward the convoy under cover of a few men of war and frigates, cruized with his fleet off the streights, in hopes of enticing the enemy to hazard an engagement; but the Spanish armament remained in its former station. A vexatious, though not formidable enemy greatly annoyed the British fleet; during the siege several gun-boats, constructed at Algeziras on the western side of Gibraltar bay, by night crossed and fired on the town and garrison. When the convoy was in
the

the bay, about twenty of these boats sallied, under the benefit of a calm, every morning from Algezi-
ras, and with a fixed and steady aim regularly canonaded and bombarded our ships; but as soon as the wind at its stated hour began to spring up, they immediately fled, and were pursued in vain. These efforts were merely troublesome, without effecting any material damage to the shipping, and the garrison was completely supplied. Enraged at this disappointment of her expectations to reduce Gibraltar by blockade, Spain redoubled her exertions for compassing her object by force. She raised the most stupendous works, and placed on them the most formidable artillery that had ever been employed in a siege: a hundred and seventy pieces of cannon, and eighty mortars, poured their fire upon Elliot's brave garrison. This dreadful cannonade and bombardment was continued night and day for many months, without intermission. Nothing, it was said and may well be conceived, could be more terribly sublime than the view and report of this scene to those who observed them from the neighbouring hills of Barbary and Spain, during the night, especially in the beginning, when the cannonade of the enemy being returned with still superior power by general Elliot, the whole rock seemed to vomit out fire, and all distinction of parts were lost in flame and smoke. While the fleet continued in the bay, general Elliot retorted the enemy's attack with a prodigious shower of fire; but as it was a standing maxim with that experienced and wise commander, never to waste his ammunition, and as the great and evidently in-
creasing

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The Spanish
resolve to
attempt its
reduction by
storm.

Immense
preparations
for that pur-
pose.

Constant
cannonade
and bom-
bardment,

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creasing difficulty of supply rendered this caution still more essentially necessary, he soon retrenched in that respect, and seemed to behold unconcerned the fury and violence of the enemy. It was calculated, that during three weeks the Spaniards expended fifty ton of powder each day: after that time, however, they relaxed their efforts, and were more sparing in the consumption of ammunition. The impression made on the garrison by these exertions was very disproportionate to the labour and expence of the enemy. The whole loss, from the 12th of April to the end of June, amounted to only one commissioned officer and fifty-two private men killed, and to seven officers and two hundred and fifty-three privates wounded. The damage of the works was too trifling to give any concern to the defenders, but the duty and fatigue were extremely great. The town suffered dreadful damage: the inhabitants consisted of various nations and religions; the English amounted only to five hundred, the Roman catholics to near two thousand, and the Jews were little short of nine hundred. Those who escaped destruction from the the cannonade and bombardment embraced every opportunity of leaving so dangerous a situation, and removed either to England or to the neighbouring countries. However the Spaniards found they might destroy the lives and effects of individuals, they could not advance their object by all their operose labour, and therefore towards the close of the summer suspended their efforts.

General
Elliot.

General Elliot meanwhile appeared to employ himself in strengthening his defences, while he was
I really

really meditating a terrible blow on the camp of the enemy. Having seen that the preparations of the Spaniards were arrived at the highest possible perfection, he conceived a project of frustrating all their mighty efforts, by attacking, storming, and destroying their works. He employed the greatest part of autumn in making the most complete arrangements for executing the whole and every part of this grand design. His object was to attack the fortifications on every side at the same instant: to effect this purpose, he distributed his various forces where the several parts could respectively be most efficient, and in such relative positions as rendered co-operation most easy, expeditious, and impressive. To fertility of invention, the genius of Elliot united a comprehensiveness of mind, which grasped objects in all their bearings and relations, cool and vigorous judgment, and nice discrimination; with the greatest exactness he adjusted his plan in all departments, and made provisions for every probable contingency. The time he fixed for his enterprise was a night during the darkness of winter. On the 27th of November, at three in the morning, the British force marched in the following order: the troops were divided into three columns; the centre was commanded by the Hanoverian lieutenant-colonel Dachenhausen, the column on the right by lieutenant-colonel Hugo of the same corps, and the body on the left by lieutenant-colonel Trig of the 12th regiment; the reserve was led by major Maxwell of the 73d; a party of seamen, in two divisions, was conducted by the lieutenants Campbell and Muckle of the *Brillant* and *Porcupine* royal frigates; and the body

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Sally of
Nov. 27th,

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entirely de-
stroys the
enemy's
prepara-
tions.

whole body was headed by brigadier-general Ross. In each column there was an advanced corps, a body of pioneers, a party of artillery-men carrying combustibles, a sustaining corps, and a reserve in the rear. With such silence did they march, that the enemy had not the smallest suspicion of their approach, until an universal attack conveyed the tremendous intimation. The ardour of our troops was every where irresistible: the Spaniards, astonished, confounded, and dismayed, fled with the utmost precipitation, and abandoned those immense works of so much labour, time, and expence. The whole efforts of Spanish power and skill for two years, the chief object of their pride and exultation, were in two hours destroyed by British genius directing British intrepidity, ardour, and skill. The most wonderful exertions were made by the pioneers and artillery-men, who spread their fire with such astonishing rapidity, that in half an hour two mortar batteries of ten thirteen-inch mortars, the batteries of heavy cannon, with all the lines of approach, communication, and traverse, were in flames, and every thing subject to the action of fire was finally reduced to ashes. The mortars and cannon were spiked, and their beds, carriages, and platforms destroyed. The magazines blew up one after another in the course of the conflagration. Before day-break the British force, having completely executed their grand project, returned to the garrison.

Darby en-
deavours to
bring the
enemy's
fleet to bat-
tle, but in
vain.

Admiral Darby having, in vain, endeavoured to draw the Spanish fleet to an engagement, after relieving Gibraltar returned to protect the channel. Mean-

Meanwhile monsieur de Guichen, understanding that the British fleet no longer intervened between Brest and Cadiz, sailed with eighteen ships of the line to join the Spanish fleet, and to support it in the invasion of Minorca; which, next to Gibraltar, was the principal European object of Spanish ambition. They set sail for Cadiz in the end of July, having ten thousand land forces on board; proceeding with these to the Mediterranean, they left them at Minorca, and returning to the Atlantic, directed their course to the English channel, with forty-nine ships of the line. Their reasons for taking this direction were various: they proposed to prevent succours from being sent to Minorca, and to intercept our homeward-bound fleets, which were expected at this time to return, and a large outward-bound convoy on the eve of sailing from Cork. So little had we foreseen or suspected their design, that the combined fleets had formed a line from Ushant to the Scilly islands, to bar the entrance into the channel, before it was known in England that they were arrived in the ocean. Admiral Darby, then in the channel, had almost fallen in with enemy, with only twenty ships of the line, when the accidental meeting of a neutral vessel informed him of their situation and force. The British admiral returned to Torbay to wait for reinforcements, and instructions from the admiralty. His fleet was soon joined by so many ships as to amount to thirty sail of the line: he now received orders to put to sea for the protection of the homeward-bound merchantmen; but, as the enemy was so much superior, to avoid a close and decisive engagement, unless absolutely necessary

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The combined fleet of forty-nine ships of the line sails to the channel.

The British fleet of thirty ships of the line keeps the sea.

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necessary for the preservation of the convoy. Meanwhile the French admiral proposed to attack the British fleet in its station at Torbay, but was overruled by his Spanish colleague. That commander represented the state both of the ships and men, of whom, especially the Spaniards, great numbers were sick, as depriving them really of that superiority which they possessed in appearance. They therefore directed their attention entirely to the interception of British merchandise. But very stormy weather obliged them to return, in the beginning of September, to Brest, where the French going into port, the Spaniards proceeded to their own coasts. Darby, after conducting the expected merchantmen into harbour, returned himself to Plymouth in November.

The French refitted their fleet with the utmost expedition. Notwithstanding the lateness of the season, they proposed to reinforce count de Grasse with both troops and ships of war in the West, and to support him with stores; to reinforce and supply Suffrein in the East; and to rejoin the Spanish fleet, that they might prevent England from relieving Minorca. The several squadrons and convoys were ordered to sail together as far their course lay in the same direction. The British admiral heard of this preparation and its objects, but without being accurately informed of its force, which amounted to nineteen ships of the line. They dispatched admiral Kempenfeldt with twelve ships of the line, one fifty gun ship, and four frigates, to intercept the French squadron and convoy. The British admiral descried the enemy on the 12th of December,

Admiral
Kempen-
feldt inter-
cepts a
French
convoy.

December, when the fleet and convoy were dispersed by a hard gale of wind, and the latter considerably behind. He endeavoured to avail himself of this situation, by first cutting off the convoy, and afterwards fighting the fleet. For the intended service, admiral Kempenfeldt's number of frigates was much too small; notwithstanding this deficiency, however, twenty transports and store-ships were captured, containing eleven hundred land forces, seven hundred seamen, a great quantity of ordnance, arms, warlike stores, camp equipage, clothing, and provisions; many ships were also dispersed. The French admiral, meanwhile, endeavoured to collect his fleet, and form a line, but night came on before he could accomplish his purpose. Kempenfeldt, still ignorant of the force of the enemy, made preparations for fighting the next morning. At day-light, perceiving them to leeward, he formed his line; but, on a nearer approach, discovering their strength, he thought it prudent to decline an engagement. The enemy did not appear so confident in their superior numbers as to urge the British to battle: both fleets therefore parted, as if by mutual consent. Valuable as was the capture achieved by Kempenfeldt, yet great dissatisfaction was excited in England against the admiralty, for not furnishing that gallant commander with a force which might have seized the convoy, and vanquished the French fleet: there were ships, they said, lying idle in harbour, which ought to have been employed in this service.

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War with
Holland.

The war with Holland required in Europe a considerable diversion of our naval force. The Dutch were fortunately very little prepared for hostilities, and extremely deficient in seamen and naval stores, in which they had heretofore so greatly abounded. The objects arising from war with them were, by cutting off their sources of naval supply from the north, to prevent the restoration of their marine, to destroy their immense commerce from those quarters, to protect our own, and to prevent their intercourse with our enemies in southern Europe. For these purposes a fleet was stationed in the North Seas, under admiral Hyde Parker. In the beginning of June, the Dutch endeavoured to prepare such a fleet as should protect their own Baltic trade, and intercept ours. On the 19th of July, admiral Zoutman sailed from the Texel, with eight ships of the line, ten very large frigates, and five sloops. Admiral Parker was now on his return from Elsinour, with a convoy under his protection; his squadron consisted of six ships of the line, of which two were in very bad condition, and several frigates.

Action off
the Dogger
Bank.

Early on the 5th of August, the fleets came in sight of each other off the Dogger Bank; Parker perceiving the strength of the enemy, ordered his convoy to make the best of their way, and sent his frigates for their protection: the Dutch admiral having used the same precaution, prepared for battle, and both parties appeared eager for a close engagement. They advanced to meet each other in gloomy silence, without firing a gun until they were

were within pistol shot. The Dutch were superior both in number of ships and weight of metal; but the British admiral, notwithstanding this inferiority, made the battle a trial of force, rather than of skill. Indeed, both parties were so extremely eager to display national valour, as to supersede all dexterity of manœuvre. For three hours and forty minutes did they fight without intermission, ranged abreast of each other; the conflict was extremely bloody; of the English five hundred were killed or wounded, but the Dutch lost upwards of eleven hundred men. Though the enemy long kept the sea with astonishing firmness and intrepidity, yet the English were evidently superior; one of the best ships of the Dutch was sunk, and two more so much damaged as to be for ever unfit for service. Though the British ships were greatly shattered, yet none of them were hurt beyond the possibility of reparation. The Dutch convoy was scattered, and compelled to return home instead of pursuing its course. The voyage to the Baltic was of necessity abandoned, all means of procuring naval stores were cut off, and the immense carrying trade between the northern and southern nations of Europe, which, along with their fisheries, had been the great source of the Dutch power and wealth, was for this year annihilated. Though the result of the engagement, on the whole, proved favourable to England, and the valour displayed in the action was highly and generally approved, yet the admiralty was severely blamed for not furnishing admiral Parker with a sufficient force. There were as many ships idle, either at Chatham or in the Downs, as, if they had joined

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Expedition
of Com-
modore
Johnstone
to the Cape
of Good
Hope;

Parker, would have enabled him to bring the Dutch fleet and convoy into England. The admiral himself appears to have been by no means satisfied with the support which he had received: he resigned his command, and on that occasion did not conceal his sentiments *.

Commodore Johnstone was appointed to command a squadron destined to annoy the Dutch in another quarter, by attacking the Cape of Good Hope, a settlement extremely valuable to the United Provinces: thence he was to proceed to the Spanish settlement of Buenos Ayres, in the Rio de la Plata of South America, where a dangerous insurrection had given great alarm to the court of Madrid. The Dutch, conscious of their inability to defend the Cape, applied for assistance to France. The court of Versailles being also deeply interested in preventing Britain from obtaining so important a possession, ordered Monsieur de Suffrein, in his way to India, to watch the motions of the British squadron. Commodore Johnstone's naval force consisted of a seventy-four, a sixty-four, and three fifty gun ships, besides several frigates, a bomb vessel, a fire-ship, and some sloops of war. The land force was composed of three new regiments, of a thousand men each: several outward-bound East Indiamen and store ordnance vessels went out with this convoy; and the whole fleet, including transports and armed ships, amounted to more than forty sail. With these commodore Johnstone stopped at Cape de Verd Islands, for water and

* See Annual Register, 1781.

fresh provisions : for collecting these supplies, a great part of the crews, apprehending no enemy to be near, were dispersed on shore. The French squadron, which consisted of five ships of the line, with a body of land forces, being informed of the situation of the British, expected to take them by surprise. On the 16th of April, Suffrein leaving his convoy at a distance, attacked the British squadron in Port Praya, in the island of St. Jago. He advanced as if to certain victory, but was soon taught his mistake : the British force, though surprised, was so far from being intimidated, that they not only rallied, but entirely beat off the enemy, with great loss of men and damage to the shipping. Suffrein, disappointed in this attempt, made the best of his way to the Cape, where, by his junction with the Dutch garrison, he knew he should be able to defend it against Johnstone's armament. The British commodore, finding on his arrival that success would be impracticable, forbore the attempt. Soon after, meeting with five richly laden homeward-bound Dutch East Indiamen, he took four, and burnt the other : when, perceiving that he could not compass the original purpose of his expedition, he returned to England with his prizes.

he captures
valuable
prizes.

The West Indies, after being the theatre of the hostilities which have been recently narrated, experienced a most terrible enemy in the warring elements. This was a hurricane, far exceeding in tremendous horror and dreadful destruction the usual convulsions of the torrid zone. On the 10th of October 1780, this engine of devastation commenced its fell movements in the island of

West In-
dies.

Tremend-
ous hurri-
cane in the
Leeward
Islands ;

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Barbadoes. Thunder and lightning, whirlwinds, earthquakes, torrents of rain, fire, air, earth, and water, appeared to vie with each other in rapidity of desolation. The first night, Bridgetown, the capital of the island, was levelled with the ground. Other towns, as well as villages and single houses, shared the same fate: plantations were destroyed, the produce of the earth was torn up, animals perished, and numbers of human beings fell either victims to the fury of the elements, or to the downfall of buildings*. The fear of a pestilence, from the multitude of dead bodies in so putrifying a climate, compelled the survivors instantaneously to bury the dead, without allowing to relations and friends the melancholy pleasure of a distinguishing attention to the objects of their affection. The negroes by rapine and violence added to the general calamity, and as they were much more numerous than the whites, might have utterly ruined the island, had not general Vaughan with a considerable body of troops been stationed upon it, and awed those barbarians to quietness and obedience. The prisons being involved in the common destruction, the late tenants of those mansions, who had been confined for violating the laws, joined in the outrages; but the prisoners of war, especially a party of Spaniards, acted with the greatest humanity and honour, in assisting the distressed inhabitants and preserving public order. The islands of St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent's, and Dominica, were also desolated. The French islands in the same

* Annual Register, 1781.

quarter of the West Indies, especially Martinique and Guadaloupe, suffered no less than the English *.

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But a still more direful hurricane, on the 3d of October, wreaked its vengeance on Jamaica, and especially on the districts of Westmorland and Hanover, two of the most fertile spots in the island. The inhabitants of Savannah la Mar, a considerable trading town in that quarter, were beholding with astonishment such a swell of the sea as had never before been seen, when, on a sudden, the waters of the deep, bursting through all bounds, overwhelmed the town, and swept man, beast, and habitation in one torrent of destruction. What the waters did not reach in the higher vicinity, combined tempest and earthquake finished. Besides present desolation, this dreadful scourge, by covering the most fertile tracts with sand and other barren substances, sterilised the ground, and rendered it unsusceptible of future culture. The loss of property was estimated at upwards of a million sterling in two parishes in Jamaica. Their neighbours endeavoured to alleviate the miseries of the sufferers; but their principal and most effectual relief they derived from the

in Jamaica.

Humane
endeavours
to alleviate
the dis-
tresses,

* It is remarkable, that in the same month some parts of the country in the vicinity of London experienced a tornado very unusual in this northern climate. The storm burst on Hammer-smith, Roehampton, Richmond, Kingston, and the environs. At Hammer-smith it blew down a considerable part of the church, though very strongly built, and both there and at other places damaged a number of houses. The same day a much more violent tempest raged on the coast of Normandy.—

See Chronicle in the Annual Register 1780, and Gentleman's Magazine for October in the same year.

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1781.

The cam-
paign opens.

mother-country, in the generous benefactions of individuals, and the liberal munificence of the legislature.

Admiral Rodney was fortunately at New York at this terrible season, and returned at the close of the year to the West Indies. Having concerted his plan of operation with general Vaughan, he, together with that commander, undertook an expedition for the recovery of St. Vincent's, in the expectation of finding its fortifications dismantled, and its garrison impaired by the recent hurricane. Having however reconnoitred, and finding both the works and garrison in such force as to require more time for reduction than its comparative value justified, he therefore desisted from the attempt. No sooner had Britain been compelled to go to war with Holland, than ministers, with a meritorious policy, projected to strike a blow, which should prove fatal to the commercial resources of her ungrateful enemy. The Dutch island of St. Eustatius, though itself a barren rock, had long been the seat of an immense and lucrative commerce: it was a general market and magazine to all nations; its largest gains were, during the seasons of war, among its neighbours, as it then derived from its neutrality unbounded freedom of trade. The property on a settlement so circumstanced was known to be extremely great: to the acquisition of such valuable spoils, therefore, government directed its views, and sent instructions to the commanders to make an attempt on the opulent repository. As the place was naturally strong, with the assistance of the French it might have been rendered able to withstand an attack. Our commanders,

manders, to anticipate reinforcements, and at the same time deceive the enemy, first pretended a design of assailing Martinico; but suddenly appearing before the island of St. Eustatius, they surrounded it with a great force. The admiral and general summoned the governor to surrender, with which demand that officer very prudently complied, and recommended the town and inhabitants to the known clemency of the British conquerors. The wealth found in this place was estimated on a moderate calculation at three millions sterling. Soon after, a convoy of Dutch merchantmen richly laden were captured by three of Rodney's ships, and the prizes estimated at about six hundred thousand pounds sterling. About this time, some enterprising adventurers from Bristol, with a squadron of privateers, sailed to Surinam, and under the guns of the Dutch forts brought away every valuable ship from the settlements of Demarara and Isequeibo. Thus Holland, in the destruction of her commerce, was taught the folly of provoking to hostilities the most powerful maritime state of the universe*.

The court of Versailles formed the same project this campaign, which had been defeated in the preceding, to overpower the English force in the West

* British merchants being proprietors of some parts of the property captured in the Dutch settlements, considerable disputes arose between them and the admiral on this subject. It is remarkable, that in one of the letters written on this occasion, Rodney prophesied that Demarara would in a few years very far surpass in value the expectations which were then entertained. This prediction, though then thought improbable, has been since amply verified.

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De Grasse
arrives in
the West
Indies.Admiral
Hood de-
tached by
Rodney,
offers battle
to the
French.They do not
venture a
close en-
gagement.

Indies, and afterwards compel Britain to relinquish North America. There were already eight ships of the line at St. Domingo and Martinico, with a considerable body of land forces. On the 22d of March, count de Grasse, with twenty sail of the line, one of fifty-four guns, and six thousand land forces, sailed for the West Indies, with an immense convoy, amounting to two hundred and fifty ships, and arrived off Martinico. In the end of April, sir George Rodney having detached three of his ships to escort the St. Eustatius booty to Britain under commodore Hotham, had only twenty-one ships of the line, while de Grasse, being reinforced from Martinico, had twenty-four. Rodney himself remaining with general Vaughan at St. Eustatius, sent sir Samuel Hood towards Martinico, in order to intercept de Grasse's fleet and convoy. On the 28th of April, admiral Hood was informed by his advanced cruisers, that the enemy were approaching in the channel between St. Lucia and Martinico. The next morning he descried the fleet before the convoy; and though he had only eighteen ships of the line to twenty-four, and the enemy had the wind in their favour, the British commander determined to hazard an engagement. With great skill and dexterity he endeavoured to gain the wind, and come to close battle. De Grasse, however, would not venture a decisive action, and from his windward position being enabled to preserve the distance which he chose, began to cannonade so far from the British ships as to admit of little execution on either side. During the first conflict, the British van, however, and the fore-
most

most ships of the centre, after repeated endeavours, at last succeeded in approaching nearer to the enemy, and having received a very heavy fire, were considerably damaged in their masts, hulls, and rigging, before the rest of our ships came up to their assistance. Finding his wounded ships in a very shattered condition, admiral Hood thought it prudent during the night to sail for Antigua. The marquis de Bouillé attempted, in the absence of our fleet, to reduce St. Lucia on the 10th of May; but by the vigorous resistance of the garrison he was compelled to relinquish the design. Admiral Rodney now found it necessary, instead of spending more time at St. Eustatius, to employ his whole force against the French armament; he therefore immediately sailed to Antigua, and, as soon as the ships were repaired, proceeded towards Barbadoes.

On the very day that sir George Rodney with the fleets from Antigua arrived at Barbadoes, a small French squadron, with a considerable body of land forces, under the conduct of M. de Blanchelande, late governor of St. Vincent's, appeared off the island of Tobago. On the 23d of May, the day on which the enemy appeared, Mr. George Fergusson, the governor, sent the intelligence to Rodney, which the admiral received on the 26th. The naval commander imagined the force of the enemy much less considerable than it was, and on that supposition destined six sail of the line and some frigates, under admiral Drake, with about six hundred land forces, for its relief. That officer having arrived on the 30th off Tobago, descried between him and the land the enemy's fleet, consisting of

A French
armament
invades
Tobago.

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Character
and gallant
defence of
governor
Fergusson.His judicious and
kind treatment of his
negroes;

of twenty-four sail of the line. Finding it impossible to attempt a landing, he retired, and sent the commander in chief intelligence of the posture of affairs. Meanwhile, about three thousand French troops landed on the island. The defenders, including a few soldiers and the colonial militia, amounted only to four hundred and twenty-seven whites; but they found most faithful and intrepid auxiliaries in their blacks. Governor Fergusson * himself was distinguished for his treatment of negroes, the joint result of judgment and humanity, by which he secured the obedience, while he conciliated the affection, and established the fidelity, of his labourers. His precept and example influencing other planters, rendered the condition of the blacks much more comfortable than in most of the other settlements, and attached to their masters, hearts very susceptible of kind impressions. The island, however, not being far advanced in cultivation, the number of negroes fit to bear arms was but small. The gallant Fergusson made a skilful and vigorous defence against an enemy four times the number of his brave band. Trusting that his message would bring effectual succour, he occupied a strong post, and for seven days prevented the enemy from making progress. The marquis de Bouillé, commander of the invaders, found all attempts to dislodge his opponents vain; wherefore, to reduce them to submission, he began to destroy their plantations. The islanders, seeing the approaching devastation of their property, were awed to concessions, which the fear of personal dan-

* Brother to the colonel, who lived and died so honourably.
—See this history, chap. xxv.

ger could not extort, and at last agreed to capitulate. The firmness of the governor restraining them from precipitate offers, procured honourable and advantageous terms. Admiral Rodney did not escape censure for not having adopted more effectual measures for the relief of Tobago; and it was asserted with some reason, that the French, without a great superiority of naval force, had in this campaign acquired a most important advantage in the West Indies. From the capture of Tobago in the beginning of June, to the beginning of August, de Grasse continued in the West Indies, without being encountered by Rodney; and in July failed to St. Domingo, where, after being reinforced by five ships of the line, he escorted the rich mercantile convoy, with a fleet amounting to twenty-eight ships of the line. He conducted the convoy northwards until they were out of danger, and proceeded himself to the second object of his expedition. Rodney, conceiving that his health required an immediate return to his native country, escorted the West India convoy home, and sent the greater part of his fleet, under sir Samuel Hood, to watch the motions of de Grasse.

While these operations were carrying on between the French and British among the eastern settlements of the West Indies, the Spaniards were not inactive in the western. Elated with their successful attack against the British settlements on the Mississippi, they had extended their views to West Florida. In the year 1780, they had captured the fort of Bobille, on the confines of Florida; and in 1781, preparing a considerable armament from the Havannah, they

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1781.
overpowered by numbers, he yields to an honourable capitulation.

The Spaniards reduce West Florida.

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they resolved to besiege Pensacola. The enemy on their first departure were dispersed by a hurricane, but soon refitting, again set sail with eight thousand land forces, and fifteen ships of the line. On the 9th of March they arrived at Pensacola. Mr. Chester, governor of the province, and general Campbell, governor of the town, with a garrison not exceeding three thousand men including inhabitants, made the most skilful dispositions for the defence of the place. The enemy were near two months employed against Pensacola, before they were prepared for a general assault; and though they must ultimately, from the vast superiority of their numbers, have prevailed, yet the courage and activity of the garrison would have withstood their efforts much longer, had not their principal redoubt been accidentally blown up by the falling of a bomb at the door of the magazine, which set fire to the powder. The garrison now finding that farther defence was hopeless, next morning agreed to capitulate, being the 9th of May, exactly two months after the siege commenced; and thus the province of West Florida became a possession of Spain.

Last efforts
of Britain
for the re-
covery of
North Ame-
rica.

The history now comes to the last exertions of Britain for the recovery of North America,—efforts glorious to the valour of her champions, but terminating in events melancholy to the national interests. Ministry had uniformly been remarkable, during the American war, for misapprehending situations and events, over-rating partial advantages, and conceiving them to be general and decisive. The reduction of Charlestown, and compulsory submission of South Carolina, they considered as certain indications

tions of her future success, and of the desire of the colonists to return to their connection with the parent country. They received the exaggerations of deserters from America as authentic testimony, and gave to the effusions of disappointed pride and resentment, a belief due only to the impartial narratives of truth. The defection of Arnold elevated their hopes of recovering the colonies; they considered his manifesto describing both the weakness and discontent of the American army, as unquestionable evidence*. Proceeding on such superficial views

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Misinformation and
false conclusions of
ministers.

* The following extract from a letter written by a respectable field officer of the guards, dated New York, August the 24th, 1781, illustrates the opinion which was entertained by impartial observers on the spot, concerning the information and conduct of ministry, with prophetic sagacity predicts the event:—

“ Well, here I am once more, wrapt up in military nonsense; for what but nonsense must be the science of *destroying mankind*, when taylor and shoe-makers start up generals, and dare to oppose us regularly bred practitioners: however, “ *ex nihilo nihil fit*,” and these self-created heroes have the less merit, as we have learnt to bear and forbear, and even turn the left cheek where the right has been smitten.

“ Now, my good friend, I lament that it is not in my power to send you much consolation from here. The strange and unaccountable infatuation that attends our sagacious ministers at home, (who seem to embrace every phantom, merely that they may be deceived,) will indubitably assist others on this side of the Atlantic in bringing this rebellion to a most dishonourable conclusion. To enter into a particular detail of all our follies, &c. &c. would take up a volume; but I should wish to give you some idea of our present situation at New York.—When I left England it was confidently asserted by those who ought to have known better, ‘ that the rebel army was scarce existing; that the people in general was in a state of the utmost misery and despondency, their finances totally exhausted, without credit, without

views and feeble reasoning, they formed their expectations and plans. It was apprehended that general Clinton, from the supposed weakness and disaf-

without trade, or the means of procuring the common necessities of life; and, at the same time, general inclination to submit to the mercy of Great Britain.'—This was the language on the 1st of last April: I own that was a day on which it is usual for the unwary passenger to be held up to ridicule by much greater fools than himself.

“ With respect to the rebels:—at no period of time since the commencement of this infamous rebellion, have the Americans fitted out so many large ships as within these eight months: their success (thanks to our navy) has answered their most sanguine expectations. Their trade from Philadelphia to the Havannah and the West Indies has been very great, although it is in the power of two frigates to secure the entrance into the river Delaware. The success of the Spaniards at Pensacola was entirely owing to the constant supplies of flour they received from the rebels, without which they could not have subsisted their army. With respect to the misery of the people, I leave you to judge how great it must be, when beef and mutton sell at the rate of two-pence a pound in the Jerseys, while we in New York pay two shillings: other things in proportion.—The depreciation of their paper money is now so far from being a loss to them, that it is a very great advantage, as, by the constant circulation of many hundred thousand *hard* dollars, which they have at length received, their paper currency will be annihilated, so that they are now beginning on a new bank. As to the despondency of the people, believe it not; for the spirit of rebellion never breathed with more rancour than it does at this moment in America. Perhaps the great successes of our forces to the southward have convinced you by this time that the Carolinians and Virginians are still unconquered.

“ The French and rebel army, united under Washington, consists of near twelve thousand men, exclusive of militia, who are now called upon to join with the greatest force they can collect, in the most sacred promise of plunder of this city. The
French

disaffection of Washington's army, would not only be able to afford that body full employment in the vicinity of New York, but also to co-operate powerfully with the southern force, overpower the Americans who were still refractory, and enable the well-affected (according to the ministerial hypothesis so often disproved by fact, the majority) to declare their sentiments, and assert their loyalty. On this theory the plan of the campaign was constructed: its principal and prominent object was, that lord Cornwallis should pervade the interjacent

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Object and
plan of the
campaign
1781.

French fleet from the West Indies is expected in a very short time with reinforcement, and then we are to expect to be attacked here. As to the British army in these lines, small as it is, it is equal, beyond a doubt, to the annihilation of the Monsieurs and rebels under the great general Washington, if they would risque a battle, which we have no reason to suppose they would not do, as they continue to insult us so unpunished. The conduct of this war has been, and continues to be, most shameful and unpardonable; and neither justice nor common sense is permitted to have the smallest weight in the counsels of our great men. Public faith, once deemed inviolable, is daily sacrificed, and not the smallest attention is paid to any thing but plunder. The expenditure of public money is notoriously committed to the most mean and dishonest of men. There is not a paltry clerk in one of our departments, who cannot in the space of a twelvemonth afford to keep his town and country house, carriage, &c. &c. and realize thousands. Facts must speak for themselves; and I hope they will be required. It is impossible, in short, to suppose affairs can go as they should do, when merit is *discouraged*, infamy *rewarded*, and the name of an *honest* man a sufficient bar to his advancement. I am heartily sick of it all; I wish to return in peace and quietness to Old England.

"I say nothing of myself, but that I am, thank God, in good health, determined to *do my duty* in all situations to the best of my abilities; and let what happen, never to *sign a convention with rebels*.

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provinces,

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Lord Corn-
wallis be-
gins his
march.Expedition
of the light
troops.

provinces, join Arnold, and in Virginia attack the marquis de la Fayette, an active partisan of the republicans; while sir Henry Clinton should in the north oppose general Washington, and count Rochambeau, commander of the French troops. Early in the year 1781, lord Cornwallis taking the field, advanced to the frontiers of Carolina. Tarleton having been ordered to scour the country to the left, pursued Morgan the American partisan; that officer retired to the Broad River, intending to cross it with his troops; but he found that from a sudden thaw the waters were so high as to render it impassable, unless with great danger: being so situated, and closely pressed by Tarleton, he resolved to hazard a battle. On the 18th of January, at eight in the morning, Tarleton came in sight of the enemy; they were drawn up on the edge of an open wood without defences, and though their numbers might have been somewhat superior to his own, the quality of his troops was so different as not to admit a doubt of success, which was still farther confirmed by his great strength of cavalry, so that every thing seemed to indicate a complete victory. His first line consisted of the seventh regiment, the foot and light infantry of his legion; the second of the first battalion of the seventy-first while troops of cavalry flanked each line. Morgan placed seven hundred militia in one line on the edge of the wood; the second consisted of regular troops, on which he had much dependence: these he disposed out of sight in the wood. The British troops soon broke the enemy's line, and concluding the victory to be gained, were pursuing the fugitives, when, on a sudden, the second line of the enemy, which

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Defeat of
the gallant
and enter-
prising
Tarleton.

which opened to the right and left to entice the pursuers, poured in a close and deadly fire on both sides. The ground was in an instant covered with the killed and wounded; and those brave troops, who had been so long enured to conquest, by this severe and unexpected check, were thrown into irremediable disorder, and a total defeat was the immediate consequence: the loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, exceeded four hundred men. Tarleton used every effort that ingenuity could devise to rally his men, and repulse the American horse, but his abilities and courage could not recover the fallen fortune of the day. The loss of Tarleton's corps, so soon after the disaster at King's Mountain, was severely felt by lord Cornwallis, to whom, on such a service, and in such a country, light troops were of the highest importance. The American general, Green, who had been appointed to watch the motions of lord Cornwallis, was stationed with a considerable force in North Carolina. The British general proposed to cut off the enemy's communication with Virginia, and at the same time to strengthen South Carolina, so that it might not be endangered in his absence: for this purpose he left a considerable body of forces at Charlestown, under lord Rawdon. Lord Cornwallis first made an attempt to intercept Morgan, which the dexterity of that partisan eluded. The British army with much difficulty passed the Catawba, and being informed that general Green was posted at Guildford, lord Cornwallis marched towards that place. Green's force consisted of about six thousand men, while the British did not exceed two thousand; therefore the American general determined to

Disadvan-
tage to the
British from
this disaster.

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Battle of
Guildford.

hazard a battle. The enemy were drawn up in the field, with a wood on the right, and other woods both in front and rear; consequently the safest point of attack was on the left wing. At the same time the general was obliged to act with great caution, lest he should fall into an ambuscade from the woods, as Tarleton had done in a similar situation. Major-general Leslie commanded the right wing, colonel Webster the left, Tarleton the cavalry, and his lordship himself the centre. A party of light infantry was stationed in the woods to act as occasion might require. The enemy's first line was soon broken; the second made a very vigorous and gallant resistance, but were at length beaten back to the third line, which was stationed in the woods: there the battle became necessarily irregular; the Americans being more accustomed to such a scene of combat, appeared for a short time likely to prevail; but the grenadiers of the seventy-first regiment, having by a rapid movement passed over a deep ravine, charged with such impetuosity as to break the enemy's line: the confusion terminated in a total route. The loss on the side of the British amounted to five hundred men killed and wounded; among those who died of wounds was colonel Webster, an officer very highly esteemed by the general * and the whole army for courage, military skill, and ability. The loss of the Americans was considerably greater, but, when compared with their immediate resources, perhaps less in proportion than the loss of the con-

Cornwallis
successful,
but with
considerable
loss.

* Lord Cornwallis announced the death of this valiant officer to his father, the late Dr. Webster of Edinburgh, in a letter, which was published in the newspapers, and universally admired.

querors.

querors. From Guildford the British army marched through a wild, inhospitable, and hostile country, and after encountering the severest hardships, arrived on the 7th of April at Wilmington in Virginia. Arnold, meanwhile, made an incursion into the northern parts of Virginia, and plundered the coast. Being soon reinforced by general Phillips, they made great havock among the enemy, and were not without hopes of effecting a junction with lord Cornwallis.

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General Green, after his defeat at Guildford, spent some time in collecting reinforcements, which having arrived, he marched to South Carolina, to cut off the communication between lords Cornwallis and Rawdon. The British force in South Carolina was so small, that their situation was extremely precarious; and their provisions were so much reduced, that their noble general was compelled to decline the proffered assistance of a body of loyalists, from absolute inability to afford them maintenance. Lord Rawdon was posted at Camden when Green arrived: his lordship learned that considerable reinforcements were expected by the American army; small as his own force was, our general formed a resolution at once bold and wise, to attack the enemy, numerous as they were, before they should be still more powerfully recruited. The Americans were encamped at two miles distance on the brow of a rocky steep*, known by the name of Hobkirk Hill, flanked on the left by a deep swamp, and less fortified on that side, because there they apprehended no danger. Superior genius here acted on the same principle

Campaign
of lord
Rawdon.

Battle of
Hobkirk
Hill.

* See Andrews, vol. iv.; Stedman, vol. ii.; and Ramsay.

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which in this history we have repeatedly seen successful, but especially in seeking and seizing the heights of Abraham. The commander attempted the most difficult approach, from the well-founded presumption that there defence would be the least vigilant. At ten in the morning of the 25th of April, the British troops marched to the enemy round this swamp undiscovered, and entered a wood bordering upon the enemy's left wing. Hence they rushed with such rapid impetuosity as to throw that division of the enemy into an instant confusion, which communicated to the main body. The Americans, however, far superior in number, were enabled to rally, and make a resolute stand: their artillery arriving at this moment, afforded them powerful support, and greatly annoyed the British force. The provincials extended their front to such a length, that lord Rawdon apprehended the intention of surrounding his troops. At this instant he conceived one of those happy designs which the emergencies of war call forth from combined heroism and ability; he ordered his columns to form one line. Thin as this rank was, they charged the enemy with such fury, as proved totally irresistible, routed them, and obtained a complete victory. Whether we consider the design or execution, no action occurred during the war which displayed in a greater degree the united talents, valour, and ready invention which constitute the soldier and the general: but little availed military excellence, when seconded by political weakness; the reinforcements intended by ministers to join

lord Rawdon, were not sent in proper time. By the late conflict his small band was reduced to eight hundred men, while the Americans, though defeated, were fast recruiting; our valiant commander was thus arrested in the career of victory, and obliged to act on the defensive until fresh troops should arrive. At length, part of the expected reinforcement arrived at Charlestown, and the British general marched downwards to effect a junction. In his absence, Green invested the strong post of Ninety-six, and at the same time sent a detachment to besiege Augusta in Georgia. Apprehensive that lord Rawdon would speedily return, Green attempted to take the fort by assault, but the garrison made so vigorous a defence that the Americans were compelled to retire. The day after their retreat the British general arrived: he soon learned that Augusta was taken, and that the besiegers had rejoined the army of Green. The force of the Americans was now so powerful, that great numbers of the provincials, who had professed obedience to Britain, threw off the mask, and avowed hostility. Finding every thing around him full of danger and enmity, the general perceived the necessity of abandoning Ninety-six, that he might converge his force for the defence of the lower province, and especially the capital. On his march he heard that a detachment of Americans was posted at Congaree Creek, and immediately hastened to that spot. The enemy, by breaking down a bridge, endeavoured to impede the progress of the British; but Rawdon advanced with surprising quickness, a party of his troops waded through the river, drove the enemy

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The Americans besiege Ninety-six;

but, on the approach of lord Rawdon, abandon the attempt.

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from the bank, and cleared a passage for the rest of the army. Lord Rawdon made repeated attempts to bring Green to battle; but, taught by experience, the wary American skilfully and successfully avoided an encounter.

Notwithstanding the enterprize, skill, and genius, so conspicuously displayed by the brave young Rawdon, Green on the whole succeeded so far as to recover the greater part of Georgia, and the two Carolinas; and had also entirely cut off communication between the British commanders in South Carolina and Virginia. Lord Rawdon having soon after returned to England, the command in South Carolina devolved on colonel Stewart. Green having both reinforced his army in numbers, and improved them in discipline, resolved to attack the British forces. On the 8th of September, he put his design in execution, and attacked colonel Stewart at the Eutaws. Great numbers were killed on both sides, without any decisive event; the result, however, was on the whole favourable to the enemy, and the British thenceforward confined their operations to the vicinity of Charlestown.

Cornwallis
enters Vir-
ginia,reaches
William-
sburgh, and
establishes
himself at
Gloucester.

Cornwallis meanwhile entered Virginia, and made considerable progress near its southern coast. On the 25th of May he joined the body that had been commanded by general Phillips; and in the latter end of June, reached Williamsburgh. His lordship considered it of the highest consequence to command a post on a navigable river, as thus maritime assistance might co-operate with his land forces. He accordingly established himself at Gloucester and at York-town, on the opposite banks of York river.

river. The marquis de la Fayette, together with the American general Wayne, were stationed with a powerful body of troops to watch the motions of lord Cornwallis, and without hazarding an engagement, to restrain their operations. Having fortified this position, and taken a general view of the situation of affairs, he formed an opinion that a much greater force than that which he possessed would be necessary for reducing Virginia, and effecting the object of the campaign. He conceived that there could be no hopes of ultimate and decisive success, without very active co-operation on the part of the commander in chief.

Sir Henry Clinton appears not to have coincided in the judgment of the other general: instead of reinforcing the army in Virginia, he turned his attention solely to the defence of New York, against which he apprehended an attack from the combined armies. To confirm him in this apprehension, the genius of Washington devised a stratagem, which easily imposed on the very moderate sagacity with which the British commander in chief was gifted. General Clinton had intercepted many of the American letters in the course of his command, and published them in the New York papers. Washington now wrote letters to various officers, declaring that the only effectual mode of saving Virginia was by attacking New York, in conjunction with the French troops; which, he asserted, would be soon attempted; for he was much alarmed at the success of a general, whom from experience he knew to be so fertile in resources, so vigorous in decision, and so

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Dexterous
stratagem of
Washington,
which
over-reaches
Clinton.

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Washington
joins the
forces in
Virginia.

so prompt and expeditious in improving every advantage. These were (according to the writer's intention) also intercepted, and completely imposed on the British commander in chief. To continue the deception, the two commanders, accompanied by the principal officers of both armies, and attended by the engineers, reconnoitred the island of New York closely on both sides from the opposite shore; and to render appearances the more serious, took plans of all the works under the fire of their batteries. The arrival of de Grasse was daily expected by the combined generals, and they resolved to proceed by forced marches to Virginia, not doubting that the mass of land and sea forces which would then be united, would overwhelm lord Cornwallis, when unassisted by the commander in chief. On the 19th of August they set out, and Clinton considered their departure as only a feint to cover their designs on New York: they proceeded to Virginia, and joined the army of la Fayette. De Grasse having arrived at the same time, blocked up York river with his ships, while his land forces effected a junction with the Americans. Intelligence had been dispatched by sir George Rodney to admiral Graves, that the French fleet was destined for the Chesapeake, and that sir Samuel Hood was on his way to the same place, in expectation of meeting with admiral Graves and the New York squadron. The dispatches having been unfortunately captured, did not reach the admiral. Sir Samuel Hood having arrived off the Chesapeake on the 25th of August, three days before, and being disappointed in his hopes

hopes of finding Graves there, proceeded to New York, which he reached on the 28th, and three days after the united squadrons sailed for the Chesapeake, and arrived the fifth of September, with nineteen ships of the line, when they discovered the French fleet at anchor there, amounting to twenty-four ships of the line. A partial engagement took place, in which several British ships were considerably damaged, but without any decisive event on either side. The hostile armaments kept five successive days in sight of each other, but stormy weather having much increased the damage of the British fleet, they returned to New York to refit. Meanwhile Barras, who had succeeded Terney in commanding the French naval force on the North American station, joined de Grasse; and thus the gallant army under the brave Cornwallis was inclosed and surrounded by an immense naval force, and an army of twenty-one thousand men, whilst his own corps did not exceed six thousand. Not conceiving it possible that sir Henry Clinton would be so completely outwitted, lord Cornwallis expected speedy succours, and made dispositions for a vigorous defence until they should arrive; meanwhile he found it necessary to contract his posts, and concentrate his defences; and the enemy immediately occupied those positions which the British general had abandoned. The trenches were opened by both armies in the night between the 6th and 7th of October; the batteries were covered with little less than one hundred pieces of heavy ordnance, and their attacks were carried on with formidable energy. In a few days most of the

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A French
fleet blocks
up the
river.

Lord Corn-
wallis is
surrounded.

Expecting
succours
soon, he re-
solves to
defend
himself to
the last.

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1781.

Skilful and
gallant de-
fence.

the British guns were silenced, and the defence rendered hopeless. An express, however, having arrived from New York, and informed the commander that he might rely on immediate succours, the general persevered in resistance. Two redoubts on the left of the British greatly impeded the progress of the siege. The second parallel of the enemy being now finished, they resolved to open their batteries on these works on the fourteenth of October. The British forces employed every effort to defend the fortifications, but were overborne by the immense superiority of number. The noble commander saw that it would be impossible to withstand a general assault, for which the enemy was now prepared. Finding no succours likely to arrive, and himself surrounded on every side, he conceived a design of forcing his way through a part of the enemy, and making his escape, but found it would be impracticable. Thus hemmed in by a very superior army, through no rashness of his own, but in the skilful and vigorous execution of his part of a concerted plan, this brave leader had no alternative but the sacrifice of his gallant army without answering any purpose, or a surrender. On the latter step he at last resolved, and on the 19th of October yielded by an honourable capitulation.

Finding
himself
unable to
resist, sur-
renders on
honourable
terms.

At last sir Henry Clinton set out from New York to attempt the relief of lord Cornwallis, two months after the departure of Washington and Rochambeau had left him at liberty to proceed to the assistance of the distressed army. He brought
with

with him seven thousand land forces, with a fleet, which was now reinforced by admiral Digby, consisting of twenty-five ships of the line. Having arrived off the late scene of hostilities, they found that all was over, and that succours so tardily accorded were equivalent to desertion. The French fleet, though still superior to the British, having accomplished their purpose, cautiously avoided any conflict; and the British commanders having no longer any inducement to remain upon that station, returned to New York.

Such was the fate of the gallant southern army and its valiant commander, from whose antecedent and recent successes sanguine hopes were entertained that the most valuable of the colonies would be recovered, and that the cause of Britain would ultimately prevail. In his laborious marches through the wild and intricate tracts, his lordship received the fullest and most experimental assurances that the people who were asserted by ministry or their adherents to be friendly, were generally hostile; that every attempt to recover America through the Americans themselves, was chimerical, as much as every idea of reducing it by force. The plan he saw had been concerted upon false principles, and he himself had fatally learned that though he and his heroic band had done their utmost, there was almost an equal deficiency of support and co-operation for its execution. The surrender at York-town was the concluding scene of offensive war with America. All the profuse expenditure of British wealth, all the mighty efforts of British power,

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power, all the splendid atchievements of British valour, directed and guided by British talents and skill, proved without effect; the momentous exertions of a war so wasteful of blood and treasure were for ever lost.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Dissatisfaction again prevails in Britain—enhanced by the news from Virginia.—Out of parliament, a majority becomes inimical to the American war and to ministers.—Meeting of Parliament—the king's speech—opposition inveigh with increased energy against ministers—dexterous defence by lord North—preliminary motions against ministers before the recess—manifest difference among opposition on American independence.—General plan of attack against administration now formed and matured—the various parts assigned, while Fox animates the whole.—Fox's proposed inquiry into the management of the navy—negatived by a small majority.—Conway's motion for an address to the king to conclude the American war—carried by a majority of nineteen.—Ministers still hold their places.—Lord John Cavendish's motion for the removal of ministers—the minister skilfully addresses himself to different sentiments and opinions—carries a motion for an adjournment—a coalition attempted in vain—the motion repeated by lord Surry.—Administration resigns.—Character of the North administration.—The duke of Richmond's strictures on the execution of colonel Haines—acknowledges he had been misinformed, and makes a satisfactory explanation.—Strictures on the promotion of lord George Germaine to the peerage.—New administration.—The marquis of Rockingham first lord of the Treasury—Mr. Fox and lord Shelburne secretaries of state.—Avowed plan of ministers.—Adjustment with Ireland.—Independence of the Irish parliament acknowledged.—Mr. Grattan's address.—Satisfaction of the Irish nation.—Supplies.—Parts of Mr. Burke's scheme adopted.—Conduct of Mr. William Pitt—connects himself with no party—reckons a chief advantage in our constitution the equipoise of the orders—projects a reform in parliament—proposes a committee to inquire into

into the state of representation—proposition not considered as a party question.—The younger members the votaries of reform—the older are for adhering to the existing constitution.—arguments for and against—the supporters of reform outvoted.—Overtures of Mr. Fox for peace with the Dutch.—Premature endeavours to pacify America.—Death of the marquis of Rockingham.—Lord Shelburne made prime minister—enraged at this appointment, Mr. Fox resigns.—Mr. William Pitt chancellor of the exchequer.—Mr. Fox gives a general account of the reasons of his resignation.—India affairs.—Reports of the committees represent the general system of government to be erroneous and hurtful, and state gross abuses to have been committed by the company's chief servants.—Warren Hastings implicated in the censure.—Exertions of Mr. Dundas.—Bill of pains and penalties against governor Rumbold and his coadjutors. Session rises.

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1781.
Dissatisfac-
tion again
prevails in
Britain;

enhanced
by the news
from Vir-
ginia.

DURING the recess of parliament 1781, dissatisfaction had begun again to prevail, from incidents and events already mentioned, and especially from repeated instances of alleged misconduct in the ministerial direction of the navy. That source of dissatisfaction being opened, speedily caused others to issue: the immense expenditure, the profuse loans, the enormous increase of taxes, the little avail of all our exertions, presented themselves to the view, and the public were very differently disposed towards ministers, on the approach of the second session of parliament, from what they had been at the beginning of the first. Both dejected and dissatisfied, their gloom and displeasure were dreadfully aggravated by the melancholy news from Virginia. Judging of ministry under the immediate impression of this calamitous event, they hastily imputed our misfortunes to a series of folly, obstinacy, and misconduct.

conduct. Many who had strenuously recommended perseverance in coercion, now reprobated that system which they had most loudly applauded: a majority out of parliament became inimical to the American war and the present ministers; such was the disposition becoming prevalent, when parliament met on the 27th of November.

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XXVIII.

1781.

A majority out of parliament becomes hostile to ministers.

His majesty's speech somewhat exceeding the usual length in copiousness of detail, imputed the continuance of the war to the restless ambition of his enemies. He should not discharge the trust committed to the sovereign of a free people, or requite the constant and zealous attachment of his subjects to his person, family, and government, if to his own desire of peace, or to their temporary ease and relief, he sacrificed their essential rights and permanent interests. Having mentioned the favourable affairs in the East Indies, he recommended farther inquiries into the condition of the dominions and revenues of that country. His majesty stated to the house, without palliation or diminution, the unfortunate event of the campaign in Virginia, but adduced it as a ground for a firm confidence in parliament, and more vigorous, animated, and united exertions. The consequent address excited a very interesting debate, in which opposition sketched the principal topics of the charges which they adduced against ministers in the course of the session, and of the counsels which they proposed to be substituted. Their arguments were directed to prove the original folly of the American war; the madness of perseverance in so hopeless a contest; the incapacity, negligence, and mismanagement of

Meeting of parliament, and the king's speech.

Opposition inveigh with increased energy against ministers.

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1781.

Dexterous
defence of
lord North.

the first lord of the admiralty; the ignorance, weakness, and incompetence of administration in their various departments, as well as general system; and the necessity of changing both men and measures. Lord North defended himself and his colleagues, both as to particular counsels and the series of policy, with a dexterity and ingenuity that, if it did not convince impartial readers or hearers, at least impressed them with a high opinion of the speaker's ability.

On the 4th of December, Mr. Burke proposed an inquiry into the conduct of the captors of St. Eustatius; a confiscation of effects, he alleged, there took place contrary to national justice and to national policy. To prove his first head, he entered into a very learned and able discussion of the extent of powers acquired by conquerors over an enemy surrendering at discretion; and for this purpose quoted the authority of the most celebrated writers on the law of nations, traced the history of these laws, and their actual state, as elucidated by the concurrent practice of all civilized societies. The feelings of mankind had even exceeded the theories of jurisprudence in mitigating the calamities of war: hence he inferred the necessity, in the present improved state of that code, of interpreting the maxims of law, even in the most mild and favourable sense. He therefore contended, that from the moment of submission, the vanquished parties were entitled to the security of subjects. Having laid down this proposition, he proceeded to a detail of the alleged enormities which he contended to be contrary to every dictate of justice and humanity, and offered

to prove his allegations by testimony. Such cruelty and depredation, by exciting the hatred and enmity of neutral states, were no less impolitic than unjust. Admiral Rodney, without controverting Mr. Burke's general principle, totally denied his statement of the case: the Dutch were at war with us, therefore it was perfectly fair, and consistent with the law of nations, that their property captured without a capitulation should be confiscated: he had seized the whole, not for himself and the other captors, but for the crown: he could have no mercenary views, as he did not till long after receive intelligence of the king's intention to bestow the booty on the fleet and army. He knew of no outrage, and never had heard that any was committed by the conquerors. The charge being unsupported by facts and documents, Mr. Burke's motion was negatived. On the 12th of December, the day appointed for considering the army supplies, a motion was brought forward by sir James Lowther concerning the American war, apparently intended to found the dispositions of the house, and preparatory to more pointed propositions. It was proposed to declare, that the war in North America had been hitherto ineffectual to the purposes for which it was undertaken; and that perseverance in it would be unavailing, and also injurious to the country, by weakening her power to resist her ancient and confederated enemies. On this subject, so often discussed in such a variety of forms, there could be little novelty of argument. But opposition, in the division, ascertained the point which they were most anxious to establish: the minority, amounting to one hundred

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1781,

Preliminary
motions
against
ministers,
before the
recess.

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Difference
of opinion
among op-
position on
American
independ-
ence.

and seventy-nine to two hundred and twenty, shewed that ministers were losing ground. In the course of the discussions which American affairs underwent before the recess, the difference between lord Shelbourne's connections and the Rockingham party, concerning the independence, became more manifest than on any former occasion. Great contests also prevailed in the cabinet, respecting the plan of policy to be adopted in the present emergency. Some of the ministers proposed the total evacuation of America, and the direction of our whole force against the house of Bourbon; but the majority still cast a longing lingering look after the object which they had pursued for so many years. The most sanguine saw now, that all hopes of reducing the whole of the colonies were for ever vanished, but they still fondly fancied that they might preserve a part; and it was therefore determined, that a considerable force should be left at New York.

Plan of ge-
neral attack
against
administra-
tion.

During the recess, the opponents of ministry were employed in forming and maturing a plan of general attack against administration. The chief conduct was entrusted to Mr. Fox; and the various parts assigned to other senators, were to be directed and supported by this illustrious leader, so admirably fitted for the warfare which he now undertook. Indeed, though it would be difficult to determine in what mode such transcendent powers COULD be most effectually exerted; it is certain, as an historical fact, that the force and splendour of Mr. Fox's genius *have been* most frequently displayed, not in legislative invention or plans of executory policy, but in repre-

reprehensve eloquence; not in devising systems and measures for the wise and beneficial government of the country; but in contending that others have planned and acted unwisely and injuriously. On the 23d of January, the day after the Christmas adjournment expired, Mr. Fox moved an inquiry into the causes of the want of success of his majesty's naval forces during the war, and more particularly in the year 1781. For this purpose, he proposed a committee; which being agreed to by ministers, he, a fortnight after, on the 7th of February, discussed the subject. He traced the naval history from the beginning of the war, and exhibited a summary of the alleged miscarriages of the successive years. In surveying the events of 1780, he, with peculiar energy, exposed the infatuation which sent captain Moutray, with the East and West India fleets, so near the enemy's coasts. Having reached 1781, he stated five distinct charges of misconduct in the naval department: 1st, De Grasse was suffered to depart for the West Indies, without any effort to intercept his fleet. He had sailed from Brest on the 22d of March, with twenty-five ships of the line; Darby was at sea on the 13th, but instead of being suffered to pursue the enemy, he had been sent out of the way to Ireland. The second charge was, the loss of the St. Eustatius convoy, which had been captured on its way home; this might have been easily saved by sending a squadron at the time they were expected. The third was a letter sent by the mayor of Bristol from the admiralty, in answer to one from that gentleman, requesting information

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1781.

1782.

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1782.

Is negatived
by a small
majority.Conway's
motion for
an address
to the king
to put an
end to the
American
war carried.

concerning the combined fleets; the admiralty had misinformed and misled the Bristol merchants, by intimating that the hostile armament was not in the channel, when they knew that it was there, and had thereby endangered the trading ships of that city. The fourth charge was on the force sent to cope with the Dutch; and the fifth, the inadequate fleet sent out with admiral Kempenfeldt. The general defence adduced by lord Mulgrave, in favour of earl Sandwich, was, that he had acted according to information, moral probability, and the existing circumstances. Mr. Fox made a motion, founded on his five charges, that it is the opinion of this committee, that there has been gross mismanagement in the administration of the naval affairs of Great Britain during the course of the year 1781. The question being called for, Mr. Fox's motion was negatived by a majority of only two hundred and five to one hundred eighty-three. Encouraged by the progressive declension of ministerial majorities, on the 22d of February, opposition, in a motion made by general Conway, proposed to address the king, to put an end to the American war. After both sides had repeated arguments so often employed, the country gentlemen now leaving ministers, Conway's motion was negatived by a majority of only one, being one hundred and ninety-four to one hundred and ninety-three; and opposition cherished hopes of speedy success. Fully confident of victory, Conway, on the 27th of February, proposed the same motion under a different form. The usual arguments being repeated, opposition carried their motion by a majority of two hundred and

and thirty-four to two hundred and fifteen; and thus, after a contest of eight years, Mr. Fox and his party succeeded in their attempt to procure a vote from the house, for requesting the king to conclude the American war.

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XXVIII.

1782.

The following motion was accordingly carried: “Resolved, February 27th, in the house of commons, That an humble address be presented to his majesty, most humbly to represent to his majesty, that the farther prosecution of offensive war on the continent of North America, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies to obedience by force, will be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies; tends, under the present circumstances, dangerously to increase the mutual enmity, so fatal to the interests both of Great Britain and America; and by preventing an happy reconciliation with that country, to frustrate the earnest desire, graciously expressed by his majesty, to restore the blessings of public tranquillity.” To this address his majesty returned the following answer: “Gentlemen of the house of commons, There are no objects nearer to my heart, than the ease, happiness, and prosperity of my people. You may be assured, that, in pursuance to your advice, I shall take such measures as shall appear to me to be most conducive to the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the revolted colonies, so essential to the prosperity of both; and that my efforts shall be directed in the most effectual manner against our European enemies, till such peace can be obtained as shall consist with the interests and permanent welfare of my kingdom.”

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XXVIII.

1782.

Ministers
still hold
their places.Lord John
Cavendish's
motion for
the removal
of ministers.

Ministers had often declared, that they would hold their places no longer than a parliamentary majority should sanction their system and measures; it was therefore expected that a resignation would immediately ensue. Lord North and his colleagues, however, continued to hold their places, because they said it did not appear, by any vote or resolution, that parliament had withdrawn its confidence from the present administration: confiding in its increasing strength, the opposite party resolved to bring this question to immediate issue. Accordingly, lord John Cavendish, on the 8th of March, proposed resolutions to the following effect: that, from 1775, the nation had expended upwards of one hundred millions in a fruitless war: during which we had lost thirteen colonies, many of our valuable West India and other islands; that the rest were in imminent danger; that we were now engaged in an expensive war with America, France, Spain, and Holland, without a single ally; that the chief cause of these accumulated misfortunes was the united incapacity and misconduct of administration. The three first of these resolutions could not but be admitted as matters of fact: respecting the fourth, which was an inference from the others, Mr. Fox contended, that a long uniform series of calamity and disgrace was a sufficient proof of misconduct; and farther, that weakness and folly distinctly marked each separate measure of every minister, as they collectively pervaded the whole system of administration. Lord North argued, that it was unfair from misfortune to infer misconduct; but that

that even if misconduct existed, it might be in the execution, instead of the plans. The minister, however, was aware, that a direct and pointed answer to the charges could be of little avail; therefore, with his usual dexterous ingenuity, he shifted his ground. To draw the attention of the house from the conduct of ministers, the question at issue, he called on them to consider, if the present counsellors should be removed, who, probably, would be their successors. His lordship well knew that there were independent members in the house, who, though they disapproved lately of administration, were by no means desirous of being governed by a whig combination. By far the greater number of opposition members either originally were, or had become partizans of that connection. He was aware, that not only the Rockingham system of ruling the nation by a confederacy, but also various opinions and measures were by no means consonant to the sentiments of all who now voted on their side. Was the house (he said) prepared to new-model the constitution, to alter the duration of parliaments, and the rights of elections? Would it consent to a violation of the national faith with the crown, by adopting a celebrated bill of reform in the civil-list expenditure? Would it vote the independence of America? on which subject he understood there was as great difference between the two branches of opposition, as between opposition and ministers. Mr. Dundas eminently distinguished himself, and with his usual strength of explicit and direct argument, urged the house, before they voted for removing the present ministers, and throwing

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1782.

The minister skilfully addresses himself to different sentiments and opinions.

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1782.

He carries a
motion for
an adjourn-
ment.A coalition
is attempted
in vain.The motion
is repeated
by lord
Surry.Admini-
stration re-
sigs.

throwing the government into the hands of their opponents, to have it thoroughly ascertained and accurately defined, what the objects of these opponents were; what system they proposed to adopt, and what measures they intended to pursue. These considerations had so much influence, that the supporters of ministers prevailed, and the resolution was negatived by a majority of ten, and a motion was carried for adjourning the house until the 15th. Many moderate and independent members wished for a coalition, which should prevent the country from being entirely governed by any party. Ministers were well inclined to that expedient, and during the adjournment made several attempts to give it effect, but to no purpose. On the 15th, sir John Rous made a motion similar to that of the 8th; no less than four hundred and eighty members were present, when ministers still carried the negative by a majority of nine. The opposite party immediately announced, that the resolutions would be again proposed; accordingly, on the 20th of March, a very crowded house attended, and lord Surry rose to make the promised motion. Before he had begun to speak, lord North rose to communicate to the house information which (he said) would supersede the necessity of the present motion, and require an adjournment. Some disorder arose from what was conceived interruption to lord Surry; but being quieted, lord North informed the house, that there was *no administration*, and moved for an adjournment until new arrangements should be formed. He then took his leave of the commons as minister, by thanking them for their honour-

honourable support during so long a course of years, and in so many trying situations. He expressed his grateful sense of their flattering partiality towards him at all times, and their forbearance on many occasions. A successor of greater abilities, of better judgment, and more qualified for his situation, (he said,) was easy to be found; a successor, more zealously attached to the interests of his country, more anxious to promote them, more loyal to his sovereign, and more desirous of preserving the constitution whole and entire, he might be allowed to say, could not so easily be found. He concluded his speech with declaring, he did not mean to shrink from trial, but should always be prepared to meet inquiry, nay, even demanded from his adversaries the strictest scrutiny.

Thus ended the administration of lord North, a period, of which the greater part teemed with calamitous events, beyond any of the same duration to be found in the annals of British history. A war with so great, productive, and important part of our own community, lost thirteen flourishing and powerful colonies, the promoters of private and public wealth, and the nourishers of national force. Hostilities, whencesoever they arose, not only subtracted from us such constituents of strength, but added them to our inveterate enemies. Year after year our blood and treasure were expended to no purpose; myriads of men were killed, hundreds of millions were lavished without obtaining any valuable object. Temporary gleams of partial success were followed by the permanent gloom of general disaster. Were we to judge from result solely,

Character of
the North
administra-
tion.

solely, and to draw a conclusion from the broad principle, that an uniform series of miscarriages in the natural course of human affairs, implies a great portion of misconduct, our estimate of this administration might be easily formed; but general rules, applied to the appreciation of conduct, often require to be nicely modified according to the actual circumstances. I trust it has appeared to the impartial reader, that the chief minister possessed very considerable talents and fair intentions, though mingled with defects, and acting in such emergencies as precluded beneficial exertion and consequences. But however erroneous and hurtful the series of measures was during this administration, far is the blame from being confined to ministers. It indeed belongs chiefly to parliament, which by its approbation sanctioned their acts, and to the people themselves of whom the greater part was eager for commencing and continuing the war. When the nation censures his burthenfome and disastrous war, productive of such an enormous load of taxes, *they must remember that it* ORIGINATED IN THEMSELVES.

The duke
of Rich-
mond's
strictures
on the exe-
cution of
colonel
Haines.

While the house of commons was engaged in the momentous discussions, which I have been narrating, matters of a more personal nature were debated in the house of lords. The duke of Richmond, moved for an inquiry into the case of colonel Haines, executed at Charlestown, under the following circumstances. Haines an American officer, having been taken prisoner at Charlestown, had demanded his parole, but had been refused, unless he would take the oaths of allegiance. With this alternative he readily complied, and thus bound himself

himself to perform the duties of a British subject. On the faith of his sworn fealty, he was permitted to go and reside on his estate in the interior country at some distance from Charlestown; he there raised two hundred men, attacked the innocent inhabitants who would not join his banditti, murdered some, fired the houses of others, and threatened the lives of many who fled; by taking this ungenerous inhuman advantage of the lenity which he experienced he added perjury to a breach of trust, and aggravated the forfeiture of his word by the blackest treachery. By the laws of war as established in the practice of nations, a person taken in arms against the state under which he had accepted his parole was liable to be hanged instantly without any farther proof than what should identify his person. Haines was taken in arms; and, his identity being admitted, he was by lord Rawdon and a board of officers sentenced to be hanged, and accordingly suffered the punishment due to such treachery. General Green had represented this judgment as a transgression of the laws of nations, and issued a manifesto to that effect, threatening to retaliate on British prisoners; but adduced neither argument nor authority to prove his positions. The duke of Richmond having received some partial account of these circumstances, described the procedure of lord Rawdon and the other officers to have been impolitic, illegal, and barbarous. Lord Stormont and the chancellor stated the actual case, and vindicated the noblemen and gentlemen in question from so heavy a charge. His grace, on reconsidering the subject, was induced to make a satisfactory explanation to the young Lord whose name had been called in question, and to declare

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Strictures
on lord
George Ger-
maine's
promotion
to the peer-
age.

declare to the house the high opinion of that brave foldier's humanity* and just intentions, though he still doubted whether the proceeding was strictly legal. It being understood in the house that a peerage was about to be conferred on lord George Germaine, as a mark of royal approbation for his ministerial conduct, opposition, not choosng directly to interfere with the king's right of bestowing that dignity, objected to it on a different ground, that it was inconsistent with the honour of that house, for a person who had received such a sentence from a courtmartial, farther confirmed by his sovereign, to be raised to the Peerage. A motion to that effect being made was immediately negatived, as a violent encroachment on the rights of the crown. Some days after, his lordship having now taken his seat in the upper house, the motion was again introduced; viscount Sackville vindicated his own character individually as being by the long confidence of his sovereign purified from the stigma of a sentence of twenty-two years before, under circumstances of very questionable impartiality and equity; and farther asserted the constitutional right of the Crown, to bestow the peerage according to its judgment and discretion.

New admi-
nistration:
the marquis
of Rocking-
ham first
lord of the
treasury,
Mr. Fox

During the adjournment of the house, a new administration was formed: the marquis of Rockingham was appointed first lord of the treasury; the earl of Shelburne and Mr. Fox secretaries of state; lord Camden president of the council; the duke of

* Lord Rawdon was inclined to save Haines, had such an extension of mercy been consistent with strict justice, and the example to be exhibited to treacherous violators of their parole.

Grafton privy seal; lord John Cavendish chancellor of the exchequer; admiral Keppel, who was also created a viscount, first commissioner of the admiralty; general Conway commander in chief of the forces; the duke of Richmond, master general of the ordnance; lord Thurlow was continued in his office of lord high chancellor, Mr. Dunning was created baron Ashburton, and made chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. The following were understood to be the public measures which ministers undertook to support: peace with the Americans, and the acknowledgement of their independence was not to be a bar to the attainment of that object; they were to effect a substantial reform in several branches of the civil list expenditure, on the plan proposed by Mr. Burke, the diminution of the influence of the crown; under which article the bills for excluding contractors from seats in parliament, and disqualifying the revenue officers from voting in the election of members, were included. The house adjourned for several days at Easter, and did not meet after the formation of the new ministry, to execute any business until April. On the 8th, Mr. Eden, who had been secretary to lord Carlisle late lord lieutenant, exhibited a view of the political history of Ireland, stated means which were then forming for rendering the country totally independent of the British legislature, and concluded with moving for leave to bring in a bill to repeal so much of the act of the 6th of George I. as asserted a right in the king and parliament of Great Britain to make laws to bind the kingdom of Ireland. Mr. Fox informed the house that Irish affairs

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and lord
Shelburne
secretaries
of state.

Avowed
plan of mi-
nisters.

Adjustment
with Ire-
land.

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Mr. Grattan's address.

Independence of the Irish parliament ascertained.

affairs had already undergone the discussion of several privy councils, and that the next day, he would be prepared to propose a preliminary measure on the subject; Eden therefore withdrew his motion. The next day messages were delivered to the two houses, recommending such an adjustment as would give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms. The duke of Portland, the lord lieutenant, sent a similar message to both the houses of the Irish parliament, in consequence of which an address was moved by the celebrated Mr. Grattan, leader of the popular party. This representation fully and explicitly asserted the independent rights of the kingdom of Ireland, and proceeded to state the causes of those jealousies and discontents which had arisen in that country; the act of the 6th of George I. the power of suppressing or altering bills in the privy council, and the perpetual mutiny bill. It concluded with expressing the most sanguine expectations from his majesty's virtuous choice of a chief governor, and their great confidence in the wise, auspicious, and constitutional counsels which they had the satisfaction to see his majesty had adopted. On the seventeenth of May, the repeal of the act complained of was moved in the house, and passed without opposition; and the parliament of Ireland was rendered independent on the parliament of Great Britain. In return for the liberal procedure of the British government in relinquishing its claims without stipulation or condition whatever, the parliament of Ireland immediately voted 100,000 l. for the purpose of raising

20,000

20,000 Irish seamen for the service of his Majesty's navy*. The new Ministers proceeded to their plans of reform and œconomy; bills were passed for disqualifying revenue-officers from voting in the election of members of parliament, and for rendering contractors incapable of sitting in the house of commons. On the 15th of April, a message was brought from the king, recommending the adoption of a plan for the curtailment of expences through all the branches of public expenditure. Mr. Burke, now paymaster-general of the forces, revived his plan of reform, and proposed as part of it, a bill to enable his majesty to pay off the debt on his civil list, to prevent the like in future, and to carry into a law the retrenchments which his majesty had graciously proposed to make in his household. Without entering into the detail of the reduction which was effected by this bill when passed into a law, it may be sufficient to state in general, that its annual saving amounted to 72,368 l. He followed the bill by another, for the regulation of his own office: the principal object of the latter act, was to prevent the possibility of any balance accumulating in the hands of the paymaster-general. On the 3d of May, Mr. Wilkes having made his annual motion for expunging the famous resolution of 1769, respecting the Middlesex election, at last succeeded by a majority of 115 to 47.

Part of Mr.
Burke's
scheme of
reform is
adopted.

* The sum of 50,000l. was also voted for purchasing an estate, and erecting a mansion therein, to be settled on Henry Grattan, Esq. and the heirs of his body, as a testimony of their gratitude for the unequalled benefits conferred by him on that kingdom.

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Conduct of
Mr. Wil-
liam Pitt:
he connects
himself with
no party.

He projects
a reform in
parliament,

Mr. William Pitt had voted against lord North's system and measures, but never formed any connection with the Rockingham confederacy, and accepted no place under the new administration. Young as this gentleman was, he had studied moral and political philosophy more thoroughly, knew them more deeply, radically, and extensively, than most of the ablest men of the time, though matured by experience. He had accurately investigated the history, detail, and spirit of the British constitution, comprehended its objects, principles, and actual state: he conceived it to be the highest effort of human wisdom, and its support essential to the prosperity and happiness of the nation. He saw that, notwithstanding the excellence of our polity, various corruptions had arisen, and various evils had issued from legislature, very pernicious to the country. Considering one of the chief advantages of our system to be the equipoise of the component estates, he imputed recent measures and miscarriages to a derangement in the proper balance. Like other young men of lofty genius, grand conceptions, habituated to scientific processes, and accustomed to generalization, but not yet matured in the practice of affairs, in devising a corrective he formed theories which subsequent experience could not entirely confirm. There was in many parts of the kingdom a disposition of election franchises totally disproportionate both to numbers and to property; and hence there appeared to be a defect in the representation of the commons of England. This inequality was founded neither on alleged merits or property on the part of the electors. In a considerable

able number of boroughs, there was not only a paucity of voters, but the few that enjoyed franchises were in such a state as to render them in a great measure dependent on individuals. As there were evidently very great abuses in the administration of affairs, as legislature appeared in many instances to have sanctioned measures very detrimental to the country, it was natural to impute the conduct of part of the majorities to the corrupt influence of the crown, and the efficacy of ministerial seduction. To remove the alleged source of evil, many patriotic men projected a reform in parliament. Lord Chatham had been favourable to an alteration in this department of the constitution: his son formed the same general opinion. To the contemplation of philosophical theory it appeared an anomaly in the British polity, that seven thousand individuals should return three-eighths of the national representatives, whilst seven hundred thousand not inferior in property, merit, or any other constituent of superiority, had not a single vote*. He therefore resolved to propose some plan for meliorating the

* It is probable the great manufacturers of Manchester may be more interested in the prosperity of their country than a journeyman carpenter at Shoreham; that Dr. Samuel Johnson, or Mr. David Hume, might be more competent judges of a lawgiver than a journeyman ropemaker of the same noted repository of electors. The capitalists and philosophers had no vote, the labouring mechanics have a vote. Still, however, the property of the man of wealth is protected, and benefits both himself and his country; the talents of the men of genius were remunerated, and produced honour and advantage to their country as much as if they had all possessed a privilege of polling for a member of parliament.

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and pro-
poses an in-
quiry into
the state of
representa-
tion.

Arguments
for and
against.

representation. Aware, however, of the delicate ground on which he trod, he proceeded very cautiously; intending to investigate facts before he drew a conclusion or constructed schemes, he confined himself to a motion that a committee should be appointed to inquire into the state of the representation in parliament, and to report their sentiments to the house. This subject was not then debated as a party question, but as a proposition of general policy. Of men of talents, the younger, such as Messrs. Fox, Pitt, and Sheridan, were chiefly in favour of the inquiry: the older and more experienced, such as Mr. Burke, lord North, and Mr. Dundas, opposed the agitation of topics which they conceived might excite a ferment in the country. They argued that representation, as it stood, though in theory apparently irregular, assembled in parliament as much collective virtue, wisdom, and property, as could be brought together by any mode that might be adopted; that parliament by its present constitution, was as much disposed, qualified, and empowered to answer the ends of legislature, as it could be rendered by any increase or new modification of representatives and electoral franchises. Besides sentiments had begun to be entertained and inculcated in certain classes respecting government, very different from those of the supporters of the present inquiry in parliament. Doctrines tending to diminish the veneration of Britain for our constitutional establishments, and to recommend the visionary theories of democratical republicanism, were published by men of considerable name and authority, and rapidly

spread among their peculiar adherents. Though these sciolists were understood to have no connection with the ablest and most eminent advocates of parliamentary reform, yet it was easily foreseen that they might arrive at great influence over the weaker votaries of political change, in whose undistinguishing minds their wild and extravagant theories might pass for the soundest philosophy, or the most beneficial lessons of practical wisdom. From these considerations, the most experienced of our able senators opposed the motion, which was negatived by a majority of one hundred and sixty-one to one hundred and forty-one. On the 18th of October, lord John Cavendish moved ten resolutions, by which the house should declare the necessity of proceeding early the next session with those regulations for the reform of the civil list, which it was thought too late to complete in the present. While such measures were proceeding in the senate, Mr. Fox commenced the exertion of his talents as a minister, by offering to Holland the renewal of that peace and amity which had so long subsisted between the respective powers, upon the terms of the treaty of 1674. In order to effect so desirable an object, he proposed hostilities should be immediately suspended: this offer was made through the Russian minister, but was very coldly received by the Dutch, who were not disposed to put an end to the war without their allies. He also made overtures for peace with the Americans: soon after he was appointed minister, he proposed to recognise the independence of the united states of America unconditionally, and not to reserve it as a term of peace.

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The supporters of reform are out-voted.

Overtures of Mr. Fox for peace with the Dutch, premature.

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1782.
He endeavours to pacify America.

Death of the marquis of Rockingham.

Lord Shelburne is made prime minister. Mr. Fox and his friends resign.

The proposal being agreed to in council, lord Shelburne officially wrote to the commander in chief to communicate this resolution to congress, as well as the determination of parliament to put an end to the American war ; but that body would not agree to a separate peace. Before, however, the resolutions of the provincials on this subject could be reported to the British government, an event happened, the consequence of which induced Mr. Fox and his connections to resign their places in administration. On the 1st of July died Charles marquis of Rockingham, first lord of the treasury ; a man of plain and sound understanding, unquestioned probity, great benevolence, the most liberal munificence, and patriotic intentions. He was a lover of the British constitution, but educated in the prejudices as well as principles of the whig party, he early imbibed and always retained an opinion, that it was necessary for the well-being of this country, for its government to be in the hands of a whig connection. His adherents and supporters either adopted or professed to adopt this opinion : the ablest of these, Messrs. Burke and Fox, extraordinary as their talents were, appeared to rest their consequence less on their individual powers than on the rank which they held in the whig confederacy. On the death of the marquis of Rockingham the duke of Portland was esteemed by his party the head of the whigs, and on that account the properest person to be first lord of the treasury. His majesty, however, using his prerogative of appointing his own servants, made choice of lord Shelburne. Lord John Cavendish and Mr. Fox soon afterwards resigned their offices, and

and were followed by the duke of Portland as lord lieutenant, Mr. Montague from the board of treasury, lord Duncannon and Mr. J. Townshend from the admiralty, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Lee the solicitor-general. Mr. William Pitt was made chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. T. Townshend and lord Grantham secretaries of state, Mr. Pepper Arden succeeded Mr. Lee, the lord advocate of Scotland filled the place of Mr. Barré, who was removed to the pay-office, and earl Temple was appointed to the lieutenancy of Ireland. Parliament having met the 9th of July, for the first time after this change, Mr. Fox undertook to explain the motives of his late resignation. "It had (he said) been understood by lord Rockingham's friends, that lord Shelburne had, on coming into office, acceded to their measures; that he had sacrificed his own opinion respecting the independency of America to the sentiments of his colleagues; but Mr. Fox found totally different principles were adopted, which he would not then detail, and thought it his duty to resign. He pledged himself, when circumstances would admit of a particular statement of his reasons, to prove that they were well founded.

The two committees continued to bestow unremitting attention on East India affairs. Their reports were voluminous beyond example, and universally allowed to be drawn up with the greatest ability and discrimination. The first object of inquiry and original cause of its being set on foot, was the conduct of judges; this being investigated, produced a report, of which the following are the heads: it appeared that the English judges had taken cog-

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Mr. William Pitt is appointed chancellor of the exchequer.

Mr. Fox gives a general account of the reasons of his resignation.

India affairs and reports of the committees.

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nizance of causes between native land-holders, not in the service of the company, consequently, by the act of parliament, not within the jurisdiction of the English courts; and had proceeded in several cases to inflict severe penalties on those who refused to acknowledge their authority. The most important instances alleged of extra-judicial assumption, were in civil actions, the Patna and the Cossijurah causes, in the first, two native magistrates, men of rank and respectability, were imprisoned, and their effects confiscated by an English sheriff, for their official conduct in a case which was not under the jurisdiction of the English tribunal. In the second, the rajah of Cossijurah having resisted the jurisdiction of the court, the sheriff had dispatched an armed force to compel obedience; but the governor-general and council ordered a more numerous body to march speedily, and prevent what they conceived to be illegal acts. The most noted instance of interference in extra-judicial causes of criminal process, was the trial and execution of Nundcomar for forgery. Nundcomar, a bramin of the highest cast, was tried, condemned, and hanged on a statute of George II. against forgery, strictly confined, and appropriated to England and its paper currency. Neither the person accused, nor the person whose name was forged were subject to the British jurisdiction: by the laws of India, forgery is not punishable capitally: thus a man was put to death by a court to which he was not amenable for a crime not capital by the laws to which he was amenable. On these reports several resolutions were brought forward by general Smith, some of which were to censure Mr. Sullivan
for

for neglect of duty in delaying to transmit the act of regulation to the servants of the company, and instructions to release the unjustly imprisoned magistrates of Patna; and also for restraining one of the secretaries of the India company, by an oath, from giving information to the committee. The other motions related to the conduct of sir Elijah Impey. On these resolutions, the house addressed his majesty to recal sir Elijah Impey. The committee, in discussing the conduct of judicature, found some proceedings in which Mr. Hastings appeared to have exceeded the authority vested in the governor-general by the act of parliament. The chairman, therefore, proposed that a new act should be introduced, to ascertain the power of the governor-general and council of Bengal.

The secret committee took a much wider range of inquiry than the select committee, and extended its investigations to the proceedings of deliberative and executive offices, as well as judicative; and also included the presidency of Madras with Calcutta. The vigorous genius and indefatigable industry of Mr. Dundas produced one hundred and eleven resolutions, which he arranged into three classes, each of which consisted of three distinct heads; the two first of a public and general nature, the third of personal culpability. The first class regarded the general system of our government in India, and included a severe censure on the conduct of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornsby, with a declaration, that it was the duty of the directors to recal these officers of the company from employments in which they had been guilty of flagrant mal-

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The reports represent the system of government to be erroneous and hurtful.

Exertions of Mr. Dundas.

Mr. Hastings implicated.

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Bills of pains
and penal-
ties against
governor
Rumbold.

malversation. The second and third classes of resolutions respected the affairs of the Carnatic, and contained very severe animadversions on the general administration of the presidency, with specific charges of great moment against sir Thomas Rumbold, late governor of Madras, Mr. Whitehill and Mr. Perrin, members of the council. Bills of pains and penalties were passed against these gentlemen, and the usual regulations annexed, to prevent themselves from leaving the kingdom, or their effects from being confiscated.

Supplies.

The supplies of the year were one hundred thousand seamen, with nearly the same number of land forces as in the former year. The loan this year was 13,510,000l.: the terms were near six per cent. but as stocks was so low as fifty-four, and money could not be borrowed at a much cheaper rate, the conditions underwent little animadversion; the new taxes were on insurances, bills of exchange, inland water-carriage and coasting navigation, five per cent. additional duty on all excise and customs on brandies, about ten per cent. on the necessary article of small-beer, and twenty per cent. on salt and tobacco: imposts so much affecting the lower classes, were the subjects of loud complaint. On the 11th of July his majesty prorogued parliament, and in his speech steered very clear of every allusion to political changes.

Session rises.

CHAP. XXIX.

*West-Indies.—French recover St. Eustatius to the Dutch.—Invest St. Christophers—bold attempt of sir Samuel Hood to relieve the Island—skilful operations of that admiral—but for want of military force, ineffectual.—St. Christophers surrenders, and also Nevis and Montserrat.—Apprehensions for Jamaica.—Sir George Rodney arriving from Britain with a reinforcement, resumes the command.—Objects of the Admiral.—De Gresse sails from Martinico.—Rodney pursues the enemy, and overtakes them off Guadaloupe.—Battle of the 12th of April—gallant efforts of the French—at length Rodney breaks the line—gains a decisive victory—takes or destroys a great part of the fleet.—Principle of naval warfare illustrated by this victory—important advantages.—Summary of Rodney's exploits against our three naval enemies—created a peer.—North America.—sir Henry Clinton resigns the command—succeeded by Carleton.—No active hostilities.—East Indies.—Pecuniary deficiencies.—Schemes of Mr. Hastings to procure resources for carrying on the war. The zemindars—tenure of their possessions.—Cheyt Sing—rajah of Benares.—Stipulated subsidy.—Mr. Hastings's views of Cheyt Sing's relation to the company.—Applies for an extraordinary subsidy to answer the company's emergency—granted repeatedly with reluctance.—Hastings repeats his demand.—Proceeds to Benares to enforce compliance.—Conduct of Cheyt Sing and his people—he flies from Benares.—Alleged disaffection and machinations of the Begums.—At the instance of Mr. Hastings their treasures confiscated.—Hastings detaches the Mahratta prince from the confederacy of native powers.—Suffrein expects to crush the British naval force in India—disappointed.—Various conflicts between him and sir Edward Hughes—though not decisive,
are*

are favourable to Britain.—Campaign of Sir Eyre Coote against Hyder Ally.—Colonel Braithwait's corps surprised and overpowered by Tippoo Saib.—Signal victory of Sir Eyre Coote at Red-hill—Hyder Ally completely discomfited—worn out by fatigue, Sir Eyre Coote resigns the command.—Hastings succeeds in putting an end to the Indian confederacy.—Operations of Sir Edward Hughes.—Expedition against Mysore from the Malabar coast.—Tippoo Saib surprises general Matthews in a defile, and captures his detachment.—Death of Sir Eyre Coote, the military saviour of India.—Hastings the political saviour.—Farther operations stopt by intelligence from Europe.—Europe.—Siege of Minorca by a great armament—the garrison after a gallant defence capitulates.—Fleets of France, Spain, and Holland.—Admiral Barrington intercepts part of a French convoy destined for the East Indies.—Exploit of captain Farvis.—Lord Howe prevents the Dutch fleet from sailing.—Combined fleets sail to the channel—disappointed, they return southward.—Loss of the Royal George and admiral Kempenfeldt.—Renewed preparations against Gibraltar—enormous battering ships—large army and fleet—the besiegers calculate that twenty-four hours would reduce Gibraltar. Elliot anticipates their attack—pours red-hot balls on their batteries—again destroys their preparations, and shews their hopes to be groundless—they again attempt to blockade.—Lord Howe sails to supply and relieve Gibraltar—effects his purpose in the face of a much superior fleet—offers the enemy battle, which they decline.—General purpose of Bourbon ambition against Britain frustrated.—Britain maintains the sovereignty of the sea.—The belligerent powers at length convinced that their hostilities are reciprocally ruinous.—Overtures for a general peace—the preliminaries signed at Paris.—Independence of America acknowledged.—Treaties between Britain and the respective powers.—General view of this arduous contest.—Her resistance against such a confederation of foes manifested the immense resources—lofty genius and invincible

invincible spirit of the British nation.—Folly of naval states provoking to hostilities, the mistresses of the ocean.—Consequences proximate and eventual to the respective parties.

IN the close of the year 1781, while the British fleet was unsuccessfully occupied in attempting to relieve the army in Virginia, the marquis de Bouillé, governor of Martinico, invaded St. Eustatius with two thousand men, easily subdued that Island, being defended by only seven hundred men belonging to the thirteenth and fifteenth regiments. Besides the inferiority of force, the garrison having no expectations of such an attempt, were in a state of security, and indeed ofscitancy, which greatly facilitated the success of their enemies. A considerable part of the effects captured by the British still remained on the Island, so that it proved a very valuable prize. In the beginning of January, the French retook the Dutch settlements of Demarara and Essequibo, and by restoring them to Holland, confirmed the amity of the aristocratic party in that country towards their new ally. The count de Grasse was now returned from North America to the Leeward Islands, and commanded a fleet of thirty-two ships of the line. Sir Samuel Hood was also come back to Barbadoes. Trusting to their superiority, the French commanders made an attempt on the valuable Island of St. Christophers. The land forces under the command of de Bouillé, consisted of eight thousand men, escorted and seconded by the fleet. On the 11th of January, they effected a landing. The British garrison commanded by general Frazer, did not exceed six hundred men; taking possession however of a very strong post, the commandant

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West indies.
The French
recover St.
Eustatius to
the Dutch.

They invest
St. Christo-
phers.

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Bold at-
tempt of
Sir Samuel
Hood, to
relieve the
island.

mandant fortified himself, in hopes of holding out till succour should arrive. The whole military force of Britain in those islands was inconsiderable; notwithstanding this consideration, and the comparative smallness of his naval force, sir Samuel Hood determined to venture one of those bold measures which have generally terminated with victory to British arms, and which in her relative situation to her foes, instead of being chargable with temerity, are the wisest that can be pursued. He departed from Antigua, took on board general Prescott and the few troops that could be afforded, and immediately failed to attack the enemy's fleet. The count de Grasse was much surprised at the appearance of the English fleet, and expected to profit by what he deemed their rashness: thinking that by an increase of sea-room he could the more easily avail himself of his superior numbers, he moved away from shore. Sir Samuel Hood instantly saw the advantage that might be derived from the enemy's departure, and while they were forming their line a-head, pushed into the road which they had left. The enemy were not only astonished at the ability and judgment with which this design was conceived and formed, and the boldness and nautical skill with which it was executed, but alarmed at the consequences which must ensue from its success. They were apprehensive that the British fleet might cut off the communication between the French naval and military force. Hoping to overpower our armament by their numbers, they, on the 25th of January, attacked the rear of the squadron commanded by commodore Afleck; but that brave officer, seconded

conded by lord Robert Manners and captain Cornwallis (heroes worthy of the marquis of Granby and earl Cornwallis), and the other ships of the division, repelled the enemy. The next day de Grasse made a general attack, but he was again repelled with severe loss; and sir Samuel Hood retained his position between the enemy's fleet and army, without any farther interruption. Meanwhile the French General had made considerable progress in the investment of the fort; but from the strength of the place, small as the garrison was, he found that a regular siege would be necessary. On the 16th of January he opened the trenches, proceeded with his works, and mounted his batteries, which soon played with terrible effect. The British continued to make the most gallant resistance: admiral Hood sent general Prescott ashore, in hopes to be able to assist the besieged; but finding the attempt impracticable, from the number and disposition of the enemy, re-embarked his troops. The garrison, after having with the greatest patience and fortitude withstood the host of their enemies, became every day weaker both in number and fortifications; and at last finding all their efforts hopeless, agreed to a capitulation which was concluded on honourable terms. The French fleet being joined by two ships, admiral Hood, now, that the preservation of the island was no longer in view, resolved not to hazard an engagement until a reinforcement which was daily expected should arrive from England; he therefore quitted his present situation, and retired towards Antigua. The islands of Nevis and Montserrat followed the fortune of St. Chris-

Skilful operations of that admiral;

but for want of a military force, ineffectual.

St. Christopher surrenders,

and also Nevis and Montserrat.

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1782.

Apprehen-
sions for
Jamaica.

Christophers ; so that of all our former valuable possessions in the West Indies, Jamaica, Barbadoes, and Antigua, now only remained, and affairs wore a very inauspicious aspect to the British interests. Jamaica, the great object of Spanish ambition, was now proposed to be attacked by the count de Grasse, who was to be joined by a Spanish fleet and army for that purpose. The Spaniards had stationed at Hispaniola and Cuba, about twenty-six ships of the line and a considerable body of soldiers : the fleet, when combined, would amount to sixty ships of the line, the troops to about twenty thousand ; and a great naval and military reinforcement was daily expected under admiral Guichen. The land force of Britain, in Jamaica, consisted of six battalions of regulars, amounting to two thousand four hundred men, and the militia about double that number. From the British fleet, so out numbered, they could have expected little assistance. The goodness of the troops, the zeal and bravery of the inhabitants, together with the natural strength of the country, might have long withstood so mighty a host, and perhaps ultimately, with the assistance of the climate so peculiarly fatal to Spanish indolence, repelled the invaders : but the conflict would have been arduous, and a great part of the valuable property must have been destroyed during its operations ; the well-grounded apprehension therefore of such an attempt was extremely alarming to the islanders themselves, and to all interested in the fate of so estimable a possession. While affairs were in this situation, and the hopes and fears of the contending parties so anxiously

anxiously aroused, intelligence arrived that Guichen's fleet and convoy, after their encounter with Admiral Kempenfeldt, had been shattered by successive tempests; and unable to proceed on their voyage, returned to France, and two ships of the line only were strong enough to join de Grasse.

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1782.

On the 19th of February, sir George Rodney with twelve ships of the line arrived from England at Barbadoes, and a few days after joining sir Samuel Hood, took command of the whole fleet before the end of the month; being reinforced by two more ships of the line from England, the British fleet consisted of thirty-six ships of the line. Having received information that a second convoy had sailed from Brest, in order to compensate to a certain degree the failure of the former, and was conveying provisions, naval and military stores, he tried to intercept it before it reached de Grasse; but the French convoy found means to elude the danger, and to join the admiral on the 20th of March, in Fort Royal, where he was repairing his ships with a view of sailing as soon as possible to the westward: admiral Rodney stationed himself off St. Lucia to watch his motions. It was the object of the French admiral to avoid fighting, until he should join the Spaniards at Hispaniola; the British commander proposed to prevent the intended junction, and to bring the French to a decisive battle. The fate of the British West Indies depended on the success or miscarriage of the admiral's design; if the two hostile fleets joined, our naval force would no longer be able to preserve our islands from ruin. If Rodney could bring de Grasse to

Lord Rodney arriving in the West Indies, resumes the command of the fleet.

Objects of the admirals.

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De Grasse
sails from
Martinico.Rodney
pursues the
enemy,

fight, the former having thirty-six ships of the line, the latter thirty-four, but balancing our superiority of number by size, weight of metal, and a greater multitude of men, the fleets would be very near an equality of physical force; consequently there could be little doubt that the ability, skill, and prowess of England would be triumphant. De Grasse was stationed at Martinico; admiral Rodney at Gros Islet bay in St. Lucia, and his fleet ready to sail, the van was commanded by admiral Drake, the rear by sir Samuel Hood, and the centre by Rodney himself. Frigates were disposed near the French fleet to give the English admiral intelligence if they failed. Accordingly, on the 8th of April, news arrived that de Grasse had weighed anchor, and in a very short time the same day Rodney began to follow his course. De Grasse, in order to avoid the British fleet, instead of sailing directly westward to Hispaniola, chose a northern and circuitous course along the coast of Guadaloupe. Had he proceeded in the direct track which was to leeward, he thought he could not avoid being overtaken by the English, but by coasting between the Islands, as the French were much better acquainted with these channels, he expected to baffle their pursuit. The British signals however were repeated with such quickness and exactness through the intervening stations, that the fleet sailed within five hours of the French, and came in sight of them that very same night near Dominica. De Grasse, thinking that a distant and running fight would be unavoidable, formed his line for that purpose. Early next morning when sir George Rodney was making dispositions for battle, he found himself becalmed.

becalmed. A breeze however reached the van between eight and nine in the morning, without extending to the centre and rear. The first division of the British fleet being thus separated from the rest, count de Grasse willingly engaged, hoping by his whole fleet to cut off the advanced part of ours. Notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy, sir Samuel Hood made so bold a stand as to sustain all their efforts, though not without his ships suffering material damage. At length Rodney himself being able to come up with part of the centre division, the battle became less unequal. De Grasse, who from the command of the wind could either fight closely or distantly, drew off his fleet, and before the rest of the British arrived, was entirely out of reach of battle. The next day admiral Rodney was obliged to employ in refitting the damaged ships, and transposing the van and rear, as those who had not been in the late action were the fittest for beginning a new conflict. On the 11th, the enemy's fleet weathered Guadaloupe, and got to such a distance that they were barely perceivable. About noon that day two of the enemy's ships were seen so much a-stern of the rest of the fleet, that the British had no doubt of cutting them off: a signal for general chace was thrown out, the pursuit was so vigorous that they would have been undoubtedly captured had not the whole French fleet returned for their protection. This movement gave the British commanders infinitely more delight, than they would have derived from the possession of the two ships. They perceived that the enemy could not avoid a close engagement, and during the night the

and over-
takes them
off Guada-
loupe.

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1782.

Battle of the
12th of
April.Gallant ef-
forts of the
French.

line was formed in a most masterly disposition. The enemy, sensible that they must now fight, were also arranged with great skill. The scene of action was a basin of water lying between the islands of Guadaloupe, Dominica, the Saints, and Marigalante; and bounded both to windward and leeward by dangerous shores.

On the 12th of April, at seven in the morning, the hostile fleets met upon opposite tacks. The signal for close fighting was thrown out and punctually observed, the line was formed at only a cable's length distance, our ships as they came up ranged slowly and closely along the enemy's line, and under their lee, where they gave and received a tremendous fire. Admiral Drake, who now commanded the van, began the battle with the greatest gallantry; received, and with the most efficacious energy returned, the shot of the whole French line. His leading ship the Marlborough, commanded by captain Penny, was peculiarly distinguished, received and returned at the nearest distance the first broadside of twenty-three French ships of war, and had the fortune only to have three men killed, and sixteen wounded. As the ships were so near, every ball took effect, and the French ships being very full of men, great numbers were slain. The French made a most gallant resistance, which they were enabled to do the more effectually as the British rear was long prevented by a calm from taking any active share in the battle. They had fought five hours, before the British, though evidently the more forcible, had gained any decisive advantage; when between twelve and one o'clock, Rodney, with four ships,

ships, bore athwart the enemy, and BROKE THEIR LINE; being admirably supported by his division, he doubled upon them, separated their force, and threw them into irrecoverable disorder. As soon as he had effected this movement, he threw out a signal for the van to tack; admiral Drake instantly complying, by this means got to windward of the enemy, and completed the general confusion. The French van bore to leeward in an attempt to restore their broken line, but could not succeed. Meanwhile sir Samuel Hood had reached the scene of battle with part of his division, and contributed to crush the enemy. Even after all order and connected system was entirely destroyed on the part of the French, their ships singly and severally fought with the most inflexible courage. De Grasse himself, in the Ville de Paris, after the route became general, made a most obstinate resistance, but at last struck to sir Samuel Hood. The Hector, the Glorieux, the Cæsar of 74 guns, the Ardent of 64, were also captured; the Diadem was sunk; three thousand of the enemy were killed or drowned, and six thousand were wounded, and about two thousand taken prisoners: most of their ships that escaped being taken or sunk, were so damaged as to be unfit for service. The loss on the side of the English was about a thousand killed and wounded: among the slain was captain Blair, who eminently distinguished himself on that glorious day, and also had acquired great renown the year before, in the Dolphin man of war. Among the wounded was lord Robert Manners, brother to the duke of Rutland; this brave young nobleman, though not twenty-seven

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1782.
At length
Rodney
breaks the
line.

Gains a decisive victory.

Captures
the admiral,
and takes or
destroys a
great part
of the
French
fleet.

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1782.

Principle of
naval war-
fare illus-
trated by
this victory.Important
advantages.

years of age, had acquired distinguished glory in the Resolution, a seventy four gun-ship, during a series of brilliant actions, which he crowned in the last conflict. His wound proved mortal, and deprived the country of his virtues a few weeks after the victory.

Naval critics, in reviewing the operations which terminated in so brilliant a victory to Britain, have adduced, or at least confirmed general principles of the highest importance to the service. In the first place, they observed it illustrated the wise policy of a commander of British ships and British sailors being adventurously bold. If admiral Rodney, when he found the rear division becalmed, had endeavoured to avoid battle, the enemy might have escaped; it also shewed, that in close fight British ships and seamen possess a very great superiority, and that the increase of their advantage in proportion to their closeness, renders it generally expedient for British commanders to break the enemy's line. The consequences of this victory were important and extensive, thirty-six chests of money, destined to pay the army and fleet in the West-Indies, were found in the Ville de Paris *.

The day after the battle admiral Rodney endeavoured to pursue the remains of the French fleet,

* This ship had an hundred and ten guns, and no less than thirteen hundred men, including soldiers, on board. She had been a present to Louis XV. from the city of Paris, during the low state of the French navy resulting from the last war in which that prince had been engaged with England. She had cost one hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds before she was fitted for sea, and was the only first-rate man of war that had ever been captured,

but

but was becalmed for three days at Guadaloupe. Sir Samuel Hood, having been but a short time in the fight, was fitter for pursuit than the other ships, the admiral therefore dispatched that commander in hopes of overtaking or intercepting the remains of the enemy. On the 19th of April he captured two ships of the line in the Mona Passage, between Porto Rico and Hispaniola. Admiral Rodney proceeded with the disabled ships and prizes to Jamaica, was rejoined by Sir Samuel Hood off Cape Tiberoon, in St. Domingo; and in the end of April having arrived at the place of his destination, was received by the grateful islanders as their glorious deliverer. Rodney indeed had been the most brilliant promoter of naval glory, the effectual supporter of naval power, and beneficial protector of commerce and wealth to this country, of any personage whose actions reflected a lustre on the annals of the American war; in two years and a quarter he had struck a severe blow against each of our three European enemies. In his victory over the Spaniards, he broke that naval force which some months before ostentatiously paraded on our coasts; reducing the Dutch, he deprived them of the chief sinew of war; by the discomfiture of the French he completely overthrew all the mighty projects of the Bourbons for exalting themselves by ruining our plantations and marine force. He shewed himself a gallant and skilful sailor and an able commander, that could direct all the excellence of British ships and British seamen. Such a commander supplied with a force equal to the enemy, was successful, and always must

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Summary
of Rodney's
exploits
against our
three naval
enemies.

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be successful. This victory not only secured our West India possessions, but in a great degree ended the West India war, as no operations of any importance were afterwards undertaken in that part of the world. Soon after sir George Rodney had so essentially served his king and country, intelligence arrived that the new administration had resolved he should serve no longer, and had appointed admiral Pigot to take the command in his stead. Whatever that gentleman's talents might be, his situation had never afforded him opportunities of such exertion or display as to demonstrate the policy of the minister, who, to avail himself of Mr. Pigot's professional efforts, superseded admiral Rodney. Our gallant veteran relinquished a command in which he had now left so little undone, and returned home to enjoy the gratitude of his king and country, and the honours which had been conferred by his sovereign. The victorious admiral was called to the house of lords, because he had made the best of a force entrusted to his command, by conquering the enemy and discomfiting their designs. Sir Samuel Hood also, who next to admiral Rodney had so eminently distinguished himself, was promoted to the well-earned honour of an Irish peerage. Messrs. Drake and Affleck for their respective services were created baronets.

He is created a peer.

North America.
Sir Henry Clinton resigns the command, and is succeeded by sir Guy Carleton.

In North America sir Henry Clinton having resigned the command, was succeeded by sir Guy Carleton, but no military transactions of any importance took place in this campaign. The resolutions against the American war, and the negotiations for peace, although they did not induce the provincials

provincials to a separate treaty, yet in a great measure suspended hostilities. The armies, indeed, were nearly equal in strength, Carleton had no motive to attack the enemy for the sake of advancing in a country into which all progress was now renounced, and Washington had no inducement to assail a force which was still very formidable. The Spaniards finding all their hopes of important conquest in the West Indies disappointed, employed their armaments in less considerable enterprises. The governor of Cuba, with five thousand men, made an attack on the Bahama islands, which being defended by about two hundred only, capitulated. The French, with the remainder of their beaten fleet, concerted a predatory expedition against the property of the Hudson's Bay company, and acquired a considerable booty. On the other hand, the English made a successful excursion to the Musquito shore, and captured fort Dalin, with a great number of Spanish troops.

In Africa, the Dutch was dispossessed of most of their settlements, except the Cape of Good Hope; but they were still able to retain this important key to India.

While in the Carnatic those warlike preparations were carrying on which are narrated among the transactions of 1780 and 1781, the governor-general was not inactive in Bengal. Aware of the dispositions of the native powers to join in the confederacy against British India, it was an important part of his duty to counteract their designs. He had also the task of providing resources and means of defence against both treacherous friends and professed

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1782.
No active
hostility.

East Indies.

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Pecuniary
deficiencies.Schemes of
Mr. Hastings to pro-
cure re-
sources for
the war.The Zemindars, and the
tenure of
their posses-
sions.

professed enemies. The expences of the present war, in which all the English presidencies were so deeply, and one at least dangerously involved, rose to such a height, that even the finances of Bengal proved unequal to their supply. It was therefore necessary, not only to be very strict in exacting the revenue, but either to create new sources or to relinquish the defence of our possessions in India. The governor-general anxiously desirous of securing such valuable interests, appeared to think that the preservation of British India might justify measures that nothing but political necessity could sanction. The Indian land-holders are called Zemindars, and the chief Zemindars are called Rajahs. The great estates appeared to have held of the mogul, as lord paramount of the soil: the inferior zemindars to have held of the rajahs. A doubt was alleged, whether the tenure of the zemindars was stable on the performance of certain conditions, or dependant on the discretion of the superior in the various degrees, from the lowest tenant to the emperor. The former mode would unquestionably be the most consonant to the ideas of free-born Britons, but the latter was no less agreeable to the analogy of Mahomedan despotism. Whatever power the emperor himself possessed over the lands or effects of the zemindars, he delegated to the collectors of revenues, and consequently had transferred to the India company over the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, by the treaty concluded in 1764. The extent and limits of the jurisdiction which by this treaty the company acquired over either the lands or effects of the inhabitants, were to be

be defined not by any reference to British rules of property, but by the usage and laws of India. Lord Clive, at the treaty of Illahabad, had guaranteed to Bulwart Sing, the zemindary of Benares, subject to the payment of the former revenue to the nabob of Oude. The guarantee did not extend to the rajah's family, and on the death of Bulwart Sing, in 1770, it appeared that the zemindary of Benares was not hereditary, as Cheyt Sing, the late rajah's son, paid to the nabob a fine of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, with an increase of rent of three hundred thousand pounds, in order to be admitted to his father's tenements *. The nabob afterwards endeavoured to extort one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds more from his vassal, which, though prevented by the interference of Mr. Hastings, afforded a presumptive proof of the discretionary tenure by which the zemindary was held. In 1775, under Sujah Dowla the nabob of Oude, the sovereignty of Benares was transferred to the company, and thus Cheyt Sing became vassal to that body on precisely the same tenure as he had before been to the nabob of Oude. Mr. Hastings, soon after this agreement, authorised his resident to assure Cheyt Sing of the company's approbation of his conduct, and on that account that he should be allowed to occupy the zemindary on the same conditions as before, and at the same time recommended him to raise a body of two thousand horse. Mr. Hastings, from the analogy of Indian tenures, considered Cheyt Sing as a tenant at will, with a general promise of holding

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Cheyt Sing,

Mr. Hastings's views of the rajah's relation to the company.

* Annual Register, 1783, chap. i.

his

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his lands during good behaviour, and thought himself the steward of the proprietor, entitled to interpret the goodness of the tenant's conduct, by the fidelity and gratitude which he should manifest towards the proprietors, from whose bounty he was allowed to retain his lands *. The requisite exertions might be greater or less according to circumstances: it was evident that the terms on which he held Benares were extremely advantageous, and as obviously Mr. Hastings appeared to conceive that his tenure was good conduct and attachment to the company. His dispositions, the state of affairs soon put to the test: intelligence being received of the war with France, and a variety of circumstances having intimated the design of a native confederacy, it was determined by the governor-general and council, in the month of July 1778, that the rajah Cheyt Sing should be required to contribute an extraordinary subsidy of five lacks of rupees towards the expences which this new exigency would impose on government during the current year. The rajah paid this advanced rent with great unwillingness; the next year he testified much stronger reluctance, although the increase of hostilities rendered supplies still more indispensably necessary; and though known to be extremely rich, pretended to be in the most distressing poverty. Mr. Hastings found him so slow in his payments, that he sent two battalions of seapoys to Benares to be paid and subsisted by the rajah, until he made good the required sum.

A subsidy is
granted
with great
reluctance.

* This may be gathered from his defence, and the writings of his friends.

The third year he made still stronger professions of poverty, and the subsidy was procured with greater difficulty. In 1781, when the designs of the confederacy had not only unfolded themselves, but in the Carnatic were carried into successful execution, the same additional subsidy was demanded, and also the two thousand horse which he had been desired to keep in readiness when protection was promised him by the company on his first having become their vassal. It is to be observed, that the whole amount of the extraordinary subsidy imposed, from so urgent a necessity, on this tributary, was only one-fifth of his yearly rent; that he was extremely rich, and could well afford the addition, which was much less than his former superior, or any other native chief acting upon the discretionary principles of Asiatic governments, would have exacted. Even after paying the demand, he was not in a worse, but in a better situation as the tenant of the company, than that in which he would have been as the tenant of Oude, or any other oriental state. The rajah baffled the demands by repeated evasions, and at this time (the beginning of 1781), when the possessions of the company were in the greatest danger, and her want of assistance both in men and money most urgent, Cheyt Sing much more manifestly displayed his reluctance to contribute aid than in preceding years *. All the countries adjoining the rajah's territories were either openly or secretly en-

Hastings
repeats his
demand.

* See Annual Register, 1783, c. i.; and Thompson's War in Asia.

gaged

Hastings's
proceeds to
Benares to
enforce
compliance.

gaged in the combination; from that circumstance, together with the rajah's unwillingness to support the cause of the company, the governor-general suspected Cheyt Sing to be connected with the hostile confederacy. Various accounts, both from English residents at Benares and the neighbouring countries, confirmed the suspicion. Mr. Hastings now being extremely straitened from want of money for paying the company's troops and other services, and farther desirous of exploring the intentions and designs both of the rajah and others who professed amity, resolved to make a progress into the upper country. Impressed with an opinion of the rajah's culpability, the governor-general had privately resolved that, if on examination he found him really hostile, the punishment of treacherous designs to injure the company should be such a fine as would relieve their present exigencies. Accordingly he proceeded to Benares: the rajah met him on the frontiers, expressed his complete submission, made protestations of the most zealous fidelity and attachment to the company, and declared that his zemindary and all his possessions were the gift of the company, and at their command. Mr. Hastings, little moved with these general professions of friendship, after arriving at Benares, made specific charges of infidelity and disaffection to the English government from which he held his zemindary; of internal tyranny and oppression, contrary to the tenure of his vassalage; and of evasion respecting the payment of subsidies. The rajah denied these charges, and endeavoured to refute them, but not to the governor's satisfaction:

to

to make him more compliant, he put Cheyt Sing under an arrest. The inhabitants of Benares rushed in great numbers upon a small party of two companies which guarded Sing's person, cut them to pieces, and rescued the rajah. The governor himself was in considerable danger, having but a small body of attendants in the midst of a hostile multitude. Finding the disorderly spirit of the people, he sent for troops from different quarters to come to Benares; the rajah fled to a distant place of refuge, from thence he sent a suppliant letter, to which Mr. Hastings made no answer. A war broke out in Benares; the governor soon subdued that country, and took possession of the treasures of the rajah. Immense sums were found in his treasury, which proved that his excuses of poverty were totally unfounded. Cheyt Sing published a manifesto addressed to other rajahs, in which he attempted to justify himself, and stir up his neighbours against the British name, and immediately afterwards retired into banishment.

Mr. Hastings considering this insurrection at Benares as a rebellion, deemed it part of the great combination against British India. It appeared to him that Cheyt Sing had been warmly supported by the neighbouring province of Oude, especially in the countries that were governed by the begums, or dowager princesses, who according to the customs of India had, for the support of their widowhood, the investiture of certain demesnes and treasures under the name of jaghires. The begums of Oude were the mother and grand-mother of the reigning prince. The nabob came down to Chunar,

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Conduct of
Cheyt
Sing's people.

He flies
from Be-
nares.

Alleged dis-
affection
and machi-
nations of
the begums.

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1782.

nar, with the professed intention of paying his respects to the governor-general, accompanied with a considerable number of troops : Mr. Hastings by no means approved of this visit, he had no occasion for the nabob for quelling the commotions in Benares, and was not without suspicions of the treachery so incidental to the feeble and timid characters of oriental despotism ; not, however, chusing to communicate to the nabob his distrust, he expressed his acknowledgments for his kind attention, and at Chunar they met. Mr. Hastings being well informed of the proceedings of the begums, consulted with sir Elijah Impey, whether, they being in actual rebellion, the nabob might not confiscate their property ; sir Elijah answered in the affirmative. Fortified with this authority, Mr. Hastings appeared to entertain no doubt of the legality of the principle ; but it was necessary to the purposes of equity and justice to examine the fact ; in this investigation he requested the assistance of the judge, who undertook to collect testimonies, and the result was, that the begums had abetted the rebellion of Cheyt Sing. Having ascertained this fact to his satisfaction, and also that they were hostile to the government of the nabob himself, he entered into a treaty with that prince ; one article of which was, that as great distress had arisen to the nabob's government, from the military power and dominion assumed by the begums, he should be permitted to resume such of their lands as he might deem to be necessary. As the nabob acknowledged a great debt to the company, the proceeds of the confiscation were to be applied to

to liquidate that demand, and consequently to increase the pecuniary resources of the company when supplies were so much wanted. The nabob having returned to Oude, and not having immediately proceeded to the forfeiture stipulated in the treaty, was strongly urged not only to seize a part, but the whole of the effects as confiscated in consequence of the rebellion: that prince at last enforced the act, and dispossessed the begums of all their treasures*. Such was the procedure of Hastings respecting Cheyt Sing and the begums, which the narrator considers, with its ostensible reasons, as part of the series of British affairs in India that it is his duty to relate, though he conceives it unnecessary to canvass all the assertions and attempted arguments, all the replies and attempted refutations, that arose from this subject. Leaving the moral rectitude and judicial legality of Mr. Hastings's conduct with the appropriate tribunal by which it has been already discussed, the history proceeds to the political effects of the expedition. It afforded the company the means of paying their troops, increasing their resources, and redoubling their exertions against the combined enemies. It prevented the native powers from effectually joining the confederacy, and served also to detach one important sovereign, Moodejee Scindia, the Mahratta prince, from the alliance. A peace was concluded, in October 1781, between him and Mr. Hastings †; so that, on the whole, the

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At the instance of Mr. Hastings, their treasures are confiscated.

Mr. Hastings detaches the Mahratta prince from the confederacy of native powers.

* Annual Register, 1783, chap. i.

† Ibid, and Thomson's War in Asia.

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1782.
Suffrein ex-
pects to
crush the
British naval
force ;

measures of Mr. Hastings, at this time, very essentially served the British cause.

The French, we have seen, had formed expectations of ruining the British interests, through themselves and the confederacies which they instigated in the eastern as well as the western world; and with that view sent a squadron with a powerful body of forces, under monsieur Suffrein, to India. Sailing from the cape of Good Hope, Suffrein joined monsieur de Orves at the island of Mauritius: the French commander, with a fleet of ten ships of the line, one fifty-gun ship, several large frigates, and a multitude of transports and store-vessels, having on board a numerous body of land forces, sailed in January 1782, for the coast of Coromandel: M. de Orves dying on the passage, the sole command of the fleet devolved on M. de Suffrein. A British convoy, under general Meadows, was proceeding with troops for India, and two ships of the line and two fifties; the Hannibal, one of the latter, was taken by the enemy; but the rest of the fleet reached Madras, the place of their destination. On the 31st of January sir Edward Hughes was obliged to sail from Trincomale for Madras, to procure a supply of stores and provisions, and refit his ships. At his arrival on the 8th of February, he was informed by lord Macartney, the new governor, that a French armament amounting to thirty sail had been seen on the coast, and was supposed not to be above twenty leagues to the northward. Admiral Hughes had only six ships of the line, with the crews in a very indifferent condition, when he was the following day reinforced by the two ships of the line and one of fifty guns, which

which were just arrived from England. Sir Eyre Coote with great alacrity and expedition assisted him in manning his ships from the land forces; and having now his stores and provisions on board, on the 15th of February he saw the French fleet bearing directly to Madras, with ten sail of the line, two fifties, and six frigates. Suffrein had expected to find only six English ships of the line, and hastened, in all the vivacity of French fancy, hoping to overpower the English fleet, and thereby co-operate so effectually with Hyder Ally as to reduce Madras; and by a little farther extension of the imagination, anticipated the speedy ruin of British India. The pleasing reverie of Suffrein met with a disagreeable interruption in the view of nine ships of war prepared to obstruct his progress: on this discovery he immediately stopped, and soon after drew off his fleet to the southward*. Admiral Hughes immediately followed, and the next day descried the French ships of war to the eastward: while the convoy escorted by frigates was steering south towards Pondicherry, the British admiral threw out a signal for chase, with the double view of capturing the convoy and inducing the French admiral to return to attempt their relief. In the course of the pursuit the British ships retook five English prizes with their crews and cargoes, and captured a sixth, that proved to be a very important advantage: she was a large French transport of thirteen hundred tons, containing a considerable train of artillery and a great quantity of gunpowder and other

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is disappointed.

* Annual Register, 1783.

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Various
conflicts be-
tween him
and sir
Edward
Hughes,

military stores for Hyder Ally, with three hundred soldiers on board. Meanwhile the French fleet endeavouring to assist the convoy, obliged the British admiral to recal the chasers; and having ordered the prizes to be sent to Negapatam, he prepared to form the line of battle. On the 17th of February, early in the morning, the admiral threw out the signal for forming in a compact order, so as to prevent the enemy from profiting by their superiority; but the weather was extremely unfavourable to the collection of his ships. The enemy perceiving the British squadron, notwithstanding every effort of both commander and officers, to be still dispersed, attacked the rear, while the rest were by a calm prevented from taking a share in the action. The British ships that were engaged were much shattered and in danger of being entirely wrecked, when a favourable wind rising, enabled the others to bear down on the enemy with force and effect, but darkness intervening prevented the battle; and during the night the French fleet sailed away to the north-east. In this unequal contest, though the event was not decisive, two English captains were killed; Stevens of the *Superb*, and Reynolds of the *Exeter*; and these two ships were so much damaged, that Hughes found it necessary to proceed to Trincomale for repairs. There he expected to meet a convoy with troops and stores from England, which he intended to escort to Madras: he however found only part of the convoy; but was joined by two seventy-four gun ships. Having refitted his squadron, he coasted southwards, and, on the 8th of April, saw the French fleet
to

to the north-east, but at a considerable distance: in three days he arrived off the coast of Ceylon. The enemy meanwhile having gained the wind, and knowing the bay to be extremely rocky, resolved to attack the British under the disadvantage of a lee-shore and a very dangerous road; and on the 12th of April, forming their line with superior numbers, favourable wind, and situation, they prepared for the onset. The English admiral under these disadvantages arrayed his fleet; the battle began about noon; both sides fought with great fury; and the French finding, notwithstanding their multiplied advantages, they could make no impression on the British, drew off their ships. Although these actions were not decisive, yet they proved very beneficial to the British. Hyder Ally had entered the Carnatic in full reliance that the naval force of France would crush the English, that thereby he should capture Madras, depose the nabob of Arcot, and place his son Tippoo in his stead. Expecting the promised and destined squadron, he had with the prospects of 1782 consoled himself for the disappointments of 1781; but on finding the French with so great a superiority of numbers repeatedly retiring, he began to be convinced of the vast superiority of British prowess, and to despair of accomplishing his favourite objects. The other Indian powers received the same impression in a greater degree, and became less disposed to hostilities, which they now apprehended would be ultimately unavailing.

Sir Eyre Coote's plan of the campaign was to divert Hyder's force into detached operations, while

B b 3

he

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though not
decisive,
prove favor-
able to the
British in-
terests.

Campaign
of Sir Eyre
Coote
against Hy-
der Ally.

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Colonel
Braith-
waite's
corps sur-
prised and
defeated by
Tippoo
Saib.

he himself pressing on him with the main army, should oblige him to evacuate the Carnatic. Major Abingdon at the beginning of the year arrived in Tillicherry, then blockaded by a considerable part of Hyder's troops; by a bold and well-conducted sally, he entirely defeated the Mysorean, and compelled him to raise the blockade and retreat from the coast. Another British detachment was stationed to protect Tanjore, to repress the designs of Hyder Ally and the French on that side of Pondicherry, and to co-operate from the south with the main army. This body, consisting of two thousand foot and two hundred and fifty horse, commanded by colonel Braithwaite, was posted on the river Coleroon; and in consequence of the recent defeat of Hyder's troops at Tillicherry, was not apprehensive that the enemy would approach the sea-coast. Tippoo Saib understanding the security of the English detachment, formed a plan for surprising and surrounding the corps, with about four hundred French and twenty thousand native troops. He was but too successful, and though the British force made the most skilful and gallant resistance, they were overpowered by numbers. The humanity of the French commander saved the remains of the British troops from being massacred by Tippoo's barbarians; but those who survived the defeat were obliged to undergo the miseries of a long and cruel imprisonment. By this disaster the southern parts of the Carnatic were exposed, and the arrival of a considerable body of French troops from the Mauritius made the state of the English more critical. These forces, joined by a numerous body from Mysore, besieged Cuddalore,

8

and

and soon compelled it to capitulate; while Hyder Ally watched the motions of sir Eyre Coote. After this capture they made an attempt upon Vandiwash. Sir Eyre Coote marched to its relief, both to protect an important post, and in the hopes that Hyder Ally, trusting to the efficacy of his European auxiliaries, would hazard a battle; the Myforean, however, cautiously avoided an engagement, and relinquishing Vandiwash, retired backwards two days march, and posted himself in a very strong situation at a place called Redhill. General Coote pursued him thither, attacked him on the 2d of June, defeated him, put his troops to the route, killed great numbers, and would have gained a much more decisive victory had he possessed cavalry to pursue the fugitives. The battle of the 2d of June obliged the enemy to retire far into the interior country, and completed the discomfiture of Hyder's designs. This aspiring adventurer, with a comprehensiveness of genius, a firmness and magnanimity of mind, not unworthy of the highest European capacity and heroism, had projected to become master of the Indian empire; and for that purpose, to make tools of the French and native powers, in a confederacy for expelling the English, the great obstacles to the accomplishment of the lofty projects of his ambition. In the scenes of his personal enterprize, he and his European auxiliaries were counteracted and baffled by British prowess directed by the skill and abilities of a Hughes and a Coote, while in the more distant regions of his political operations, he had to contend with the penetrating sagacity, profound and powerful genius, of a Hastings. He was already

Signal victory of sir Eyre Coote at Redhill.

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Hyder Ally
completely
discomfited.

His death.

Worn out
by fatigue,
sir Eyre
Coote re-
sigs the
command.

apprised of the successful efforts of the governor-general in impairing the confederacy, by reducing disaffected allies, and persuading opposing states to a separate peace. He was apprehensive that the same energetic character would finish the enmity of other powers, and that the force of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, might ultimately be exerted against Myfore alone. These disappointments of past hopes and fears of future evils preyed on the mind of Hyder Ally, affected his health, and spread a languor over his subsequent measures and actions: he withdrew to his capital, where some months after he died. The constitution of sir Eyre Coote was so greatly affected by the fatigues which he had undergone, that he was unable to keep the field any longer; he therefore retired to Madras, leaving the command to major-general Stuart. The enemy cautiously abstaining from battle, and the British commander not being able to compel an engagement, no event of much importance happened by land during the rest of the campaign. The French fleet having refitted in the island of Ceylon, returned to the coast of Coromandel; and understanding that a reinforcement was daily expected to join the English squadron, sailed to Negapatam before the supplies should arrive. Hughes, immediately on descrying the foe, formed his line of battle; the contest began; the enemy were thrown into disorder; several of their ships were greatly disabled, and they expected a complete defeat, when an unfavourable wind prevented the British from reaping the fruits of the victory, or retarding the retreat of the French. During the battle, a French ship of the line

line struck her colours, but afterwards, in defiance of the established laws of war and of nations, when the British ship trusted to the surrender of her antagonist, fired into her; and the unfavourable wind unfortunately kept the British captain from punishing the infamous treachery. Suffrein retired to Cuddalore to refit: fresh troops having arrived from France, with two more ships of the line, he with his fleet and land forces sailed to Trincomale, which they took by surprise. Both sir Eyre Coote and sir Edward Hughes were very anxious for the preservation of this important possession, and the admiral immediately sailed to its relief. A fourth naval action took place, in which the English, though still inferior in force, after a very hard-fought battle, again compelled the enemy to retreat with great loss of men, and their ships very much disabled. This was the last conflict between the two fleets in the campaign of 1782.

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In northern India, Mr. Hastings was successfully engaged in detaching powers from the hostile combination. Having by colonel Muir concluded a peace with Moodajee Sindia, he procured the mediation of that chieftain to negotiate a treaty with the Mahrattas, which was concluded by Mr. Anderson as envoy of the governor-general and council. The Mahrattas engaged to suffer no Europeans but the English to establish factories on their coasts; to have no intercourse with any others, except the Portuguese anciently settled in those countries, and to join in compelling the prince of Myfore to restore whatever possessions he had wrested from the English, or their allies.

Hastings
succeeds in
putting an
end to the
Indian con-
federacy.

Sir

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Operations
of Sir Ed-
ward
Hughes.

Sir Edward Hughes having returned to Madras, was exposed to great danger from a hurricane: fortunately his fleet escaped without loss, but much damage was suffered by mercantile ships. The larger part of the crop of rice being destroyed, produced a famine which cut off great numbers of the natives; but the vigilant attention of the governor-general and the council of Calcutta tended powerfully to alleviate the calamity. There being no naval dock on the coast of Coromandel, Sir Edward Hughes sailed round to Bombay, to be thoroughly repaired: there he was joined by the long expected squadron under Sir Richard Bickerton. The councils of Calcutta and Bombay, now freed from the Mahratta war, directed their views to Tippoo Saib, and proposed to make a powerful diversion on the Malabar coast. To enable the government of Bombay to carry on war with vigour and effect, the supreme council sent them fifteen lacks of rupees from the treasury of Calcutta, which was now by the policy of Mr. Hastings well supplied; and, instead of wanting money for that settlement itself, was able to assist the other presidencies.

Expedition
against Mysore, from
the Malabar
coast.

In the close of 1782, Colonel Humberstown, with a considerable body of troops, was dispatched to the Malabar coast; and after having made progress in the maritime parts, ventured to penetrate into the interior country, where he was repulsed with loss, closely pursued, and involved in a very dangerous situation. Tippoo Saib, informed that the British commander was so far advanced, hastened after him, but Humberstown by forced marches reached Paniary, where Colonel Macleod was

was just arrived from Madras with a body of troops. Tippoo Saib immediately followed, and invested the town, of which Macleod, as elder officer, took the command: the bravery of the British compelled Tippoo to raise the siege, and he returned with great expedition to the Carnatic. General Matthews having been sent from Bombay to the relief of colonel Humberstown, received on his way intelligence of Tippoo Saib's discomfiture and retreat. Encouraged by this information, he attacked the city of Onore, the capital of Bednore (called also Canara); he took it by storm, nor was he able to prevent the outrages incidental to that mode of capture. Matthews penetrated into the country, took other towns and fortresses by assault, and though the detail of his operations be not accurately known, yet it would appear from the general outlines communicated to the public, that very unnecessary, and consequently very unjustifiable cruelties were committed. About this time died sir Eyre Coote, who had rendered such very important services to the British interests in India. Having found the company's fortune at Madras at the lowest ebb in 1781, he, with a very inferior force, that year effectually checked the progress of the Indian conqueror; and in the next, entirely overthrew his projects. He indeed, seconded by sir Edward Hughes, may be considered as the immediate military saviour of the Carnatic, in co-operation with Mr. Hastings, the political saviour of India.

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Death of sir
Eyre Coote,
the military
saviour of
India.

Hastings the
political sa-
viour.

Sir Edward Hughes arrived at Madras with his fleet in April 1783, and on the 2d of May set sail in quest of the enemy. His strength was considerably

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Tippoo
Saib sur-
prises ge-
neral Mat-
thews.Further
operations
stopped by
intelligence
from Europe.

ably weakened by sickness; they, however, fought an action with the enemy, who gave them battle on the 20th of June, in which the French, having the advantage of the wind prevented a close engagement. Sir Edward Hughes returned for supplies and provisions to Madras; but before he was ready to sail again, intelligence arrived from Europe which stopped his intended operations.

Tippoo Sultan* having surprised, and by superior numbers overpowered Matthews's band, and retaken some of the towns which that general had captured, turned the siege of the rest into a blockade. General Stuart, now commander in the Carnatic, made it his chief object to expel the French, who were reinforced by a fresh body of soldiers under the marquis de Buffy, and assisted by a detachment of Tippoo's troops. After he had evacuated Myfore himself with his main army, he sent colonels Long and Fullerton to invade the southern parts of Tippoo's dominions; and these commanders overran the whole Coimbatour country. The French were strongly fortified at Cuddalore: this town Stuart determined to besiege; and having spent the month of May in making preparations, he marched in the beginning of June. On the 7th, seconded admirably by all his officers and soldiers, and natives, he carried the out-works of the enemy; some days after, repulsed a very vigorous and well-conducted sally, and made such approaches as were likely to ensure success, when orders from Europe put a stop to hostilities.

* He assumed the title of Sultan on the death of his father. See Annual Register, 1783.

The

The first scene of warlike operations in Europe in the year 1782, was Minorca. The Spaniards had made very very great preparations to recover this ancient possession: thither were sent sixteen thousand land forces, with a train of artillery, consisting of one hundred and nine pieces of the heaviest cannon, and thirty-six great mortars. The English garrison amounted to only two thousand six hundred and ninety-two men; and the whole force of Britain was so appropriated to various services, that no addition could be spared for the relief of Minorca. The fortress was in some respects very strong, but its works were so numerous and extensive, as to require at least six thousand men for effectual defence, so that the present number was totally inadequate. Notwithstanding the vast advantage possessed by the enemy, their king endeavoured to increase it by instigating treachery; a bribe was offered to the governor, general Murray: the gallant veteran treated the attempt with the generous indignation of a man of integrity and honour, solicited to become a villain. The enemy finding their insidious proffers rejected with merited scorn, proceeded to invest St. Philip's. In August 1781, they had cut off all communication between the fort and the country; and though there was no want of other provisions, they were debarred from supplies of vegetables. This privation was the more severely felt, as they were obliged to live on salted meats: the scurvy soon began to rage, and was accompanied by a putrid fever, which carried off great numbers of the garrison, while others were daily falling by the cannonade of the enemy. Notwithstanding these multiplied evils, the defenders displayed

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Europe.

Siege of Minorca by a great armament.

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played the utmost valour and constancy, and made several successful sallies. Though by their artillery they daily impaired the numbers of the British, the enemy employed five months in constructing their works. In the beginning of February, the garrison was so much reduced by sickness, that there were only six hundred and sixty men left who were in any degree fit for duty; and of these, all but one hundred were so far tainted with the scurvy, that the physicians and surgeons declared they could hold out only a very few days before they must be sent to the hospital; they likewise affirmed, that longer perseverance in defence must prove the inevitable destruction of the remains of that brave garrison. There was, they said, no possible remedy for the sick, nor means even of keeping the greater part of them much longer alive, but by a speedy relief of wholesome air, aided by an abundant supply of vegetables. It was also apprehended that the enemy, knowing the weakness of the garrison, would now, that their works were finished, attempt to carry it by assault. From all these considerations, the governor thought it necessary to capitulate, and obtained the most honourable terms.

After a gallant defence the garrison capitulates, Feb. 5th.

Fleets of France, Spain, and Holland.

Meanwhile preparations were making on both sides for the naval campaign. The armaments which France, Spain, and Holland, had equipped to act against Great Britain on the European seas, contained seventy ships of the line. As our force for the home service was very inferior to the fleets of the enemy if united, the object of the first importance was to prevent their junction, and weaken them by separate attacks: the second was to protect

tect our numerous convoys, without departing so far as to leave our coasts unguarded; and the third, to relieve Gibraltar. On the 13th of April, admiral Barrington, with twelve ships of the line and several frigates, sailed towards the bay of Biscay. On the 20th, he descried a fleet, that proved to be a convoy destined for the East Indies, to supply the loss incurred by the dispersion and capture of the former transports. They had sailed from Brest only the day before, escorted by the *Protecteur* and *Pegase* of seventy-four guns, the *Actionnaire* of sixty-four, and a frigate. The British admiral having made a signal for general chase, captain Jervis, of the *Foudroyant* of seventy-four guns, so far outstripped the rest during the night, that in the morning he was out of sight of the fleet. The French commander ordering the convoy to disperse, and the *Protecteur* having a large sum of money on board, it was agreed that the other two ships should keep the enemy employed, while she made the best of her way. In a short time captain Jervis overtook the *Pegase*, both ships were fresh from the harbour, and were nearly equal in force. A very fierce action ensued, in which, notwithstanding the most valiant efforts of the enemy, British seamanship and discipline so completely prevailed, as that near a hundred of the French were killed, and a much greater number wounded; though not one Briton was killed, and but very few wounded: after a conflict of an hour, the French ship surrendered. The *Pegase* being extremely disabled, captain Maitland of the *Queen* took her in charge, while the *Foudroyant* proceeded in the chase. Captain Maitland having taken three hundred of the prisoners out of the *Pegase*,

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Admiral
Barrington
intercepts a
French con-
voy destined
for the East
Indies.

Exploit of
captain Jer-
vis.

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Pegase, sent lieutenant Bisset with a party on board to guard the rest, and take direction of the prize. Immediately after, a French ship of war appeared, which he understood to be the *Protecteur*, he ordered the lieutenant with a cutter that was in company, to conduct the *Pegase* into an English port, while he himself, incumbered as he was with prisoners, pursued the enemy. A chase of fourteen hours brought him up with the Frenchman, when, after the first broadside, she, to his great surprise, struck her colours, and proved to be the *Actionnaire*, having on board two hundred and fifty seamen, and five hundred and fifty soldiers. The other pursuers were also successful, and took twelve ships of the convoy, having on board about a thousand soldiers. After this very successful cruize, extremely boisterous weather obliged the admiral to return to port, where he arrived in the end of the month. Captain Jervis was immediately after made a knight of the bath, an honour destined to be prelusive to a more splendid mark of his sovereign's favour, earned by the exertion of the same heroic qualities on a much wider field. Intelligence being received that the Dutch fleet was preparing to come out of the Texel, lord Howe sailed with twelve ships of the line to the coast of Holland, either to intercept or confine the enemy; but finding they were not disposed to venture to the North Seas, and that the combined fleets of France and Spain had set sail, he returned to join admiral Kempenfeldt at Portsmouth. In the beginning of June, Guichen, who had been some months stationed at Cadiz, and don Louis de Cordova, failed

Combined
fleets sail to
the channel,

failed with twenty-five ships of the line, and in their progress northward were joined by about twenty more. With this mighty force, steering to the channel, they intercepted part of a Newfoundland convoy; but the most valuable portion, together with the escorting ships of war, escaped. The enemy being now in the mouth of the channel, great apprehensions were entertained concerning a homeward-bound fleet of merchantmen from Jamaica, protected by only three ships of the line, under sir Peter Parker. Lord Howe failed in the beginning of July, accompanied by the admirals Barrington, sir John Lockart Ross, and Kempenfeldt. This fleet amounted to no more than twenty-two sail of the line: therefore the object was to receive the Jamaica fleet, and baffle the attempts of the enemy, without being forced to an engagement with so very superior an armament. The abilities and professional skill of this great man, so well seconded, very dexterously and completely accomplished these purposes. The combined fleets neither intercepted our trade, nor could effect a junction with the Dutch; and, finding they could derive no advantage from continuing in the channel, retired from our coasts. The British fleet having returned to Portsmouth, an accidental calamity befel one of our ships, involving in it circumstances that caused a deep concern throughout the nation. While other ships were receiving some necessary repairs, the Royal George of one hundred guns was found to require a slight species of careen, which can be executed by laying a vessel, in a certain degree, on her side, without the trouble and delay of taking her into dock. On the 29th of August this business was

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Disappointed,
they re-
turn south-
ward.

Loss of the
Royal
George, and
admiral
Kempen-
feldt.

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undertaken; the ship was crowded with people from the shore, especially about three hundred women, besides about nine hundred of the crew. The carpenters had moved the ship a kreak more on her side than was intended; when, about ten o'clock in the morning, a sudden squall arising, threw her fatally upon her side, and her gun-ports being open, and the motion of the cannon increasing the violence of the shock, she was almost instantly filled with water, and went to the bottom. The admiral, with a considerable number of his officers, and about nine hundred of the crew and visitors, perished at this melancholy moment. The Royal George was the largest and strongest ship in the British navy; had been the seat of command under most of our distinguished admirals, especially lord Hawke, in his celebrated battle with Conflans. Admiral Kempenfeldt* was very eminent for professional science, knowledge, and judgment, and deemed unrivalled in the art of manœuvring; being besides amiable and estimable as a man, he was universally lamented.

Renewed
preparations
against Gib-
raltar.

Having protected our coasts and our trade, and prevented the junction of the Bourbon fleets with the Dutch, Britain now directed her naval attention to the relief of Gibraltar. From the surrender of Minorca, the king of Spain hoped the key of the Mediterranean would be the next acquisition. The duke de Crillon, a French nobleman, who had commanded at Minorca, undertook the supreme conduct of the siege: he was assisted by a great number of the best

* He was son to colonel Kempenfeldt, exhibited by the Spectator under the name of captain Sentry.

officers of both countries, and particularly of the most skilful engineers and artillerists of his own. An immense increase of land and sea forces was brought both from France and Spain to aid the troops already before Gibraltar; and many of the nobility from both countries came to serve as volunteers. Two princes of the blood royal of France, one of them the king's own brother, the count d'Artois, fought glory by combating the brave British garrison and its illustrious commander. In the spirit of loyalty which was then diffused through the French soldiers, the presence of their princes excited an enthusiastic desire of distinguishing themselves before so adored witnesses: the same spirit pervaded the Spaniards, and both became impatient for action. The besiegers had prepared new and extraordinary machines; battering-ships, which, though of an astonishing bulk, could go through all their evolutions with the ease and dexterity of frigates. Twelve hundred pieces of heavy ordnance were to play from land and sea, besides a large floating battery, and five bomb-ketches. The land and naval troops by which these operations were to be carried on, amounted to forty thousand men, besides the combined fleet of fifty ships of the line, that was to cover and support the attack. While dispositions were making for so tremendous an assault, the besiegers amused themselves with calculations of the exact time in which Gibraltar would be taken; some said the garrison would hold out twelve hours after the onset commenced; other, less sanguine, thought it would last sixteen; and some, though very few, allowed,

Enemy's
battering-
ships,

large army
and fleet.

The be-
siegers cal-
culate that
twenty-four
hours would
reduce Gib-
raltar.

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Elliot anti-
cipates their
attack:pours red-
hot balls on
their bat-
teries:again de-
stroys their
preparations
and proves
their hopes
groundless.

even twenty-four for the completion of the conquest*.

Elliot, without precisely knowing what the inventions of the enemy were, had a general idea that their dispositions were both mighty and extraordinary, and with comprehensive wisdom and magnanimity prepared against every species of attack. Perceiving their works on the land side to be nearly completed, he determined to try how far a vigorous cannonade and bombardment with red-hot balls, carcasses, and shells, might operate to their destruction. On the 8th of September, at seven in the morning, he commenced a firing so powerful, and so admirably directed, as to commit considerable devastation on the enemy's works. Enraged at this loss, the besiegers hurried on their grand attack. On the 13th of September, this tremendous operation commenced both by sea and land; the various parts being very skilfully adjusted, their batteries appeared to have prodigious effect; their battering-ships especially, so formidable for offence, during several hours seemed exquisitely adapted for defence, and invulnerable to the red-hot balls that were pouring from the garrison. The execution of these terrible instruments, though not instantaneous, was nevertheless effectual: about two o'clock, the admiral's ship was seen to issue smoke, at night she was in flames, and several others on fire; soon afterwards the conflagration was general over the battering-ships, and the sole endeavours of the enemy were exerted in saving the men. The small naval force employed in the garrison of Gib-

* Annual Register, 1782, p. 232.

raltar, was commanded by captain Curtis; that brave officer and his sailors had, in the preceding attacks from the garrison, performed very difficult and important services by land; now an opportunity occurred for exerting themselves on their own element. During the confusion and distress of the enemy hurrying from the burning battering-ships, captain Curtis, with twelve gun-boats, flanked their line, raked them on one side, whilst the garrison was destroying them from another. The Spanish boats durst no longer attempt to assist the battering-ships; and, when daylight appeared, the assailants who had been stationed on those were seen perishing in the flames, or, endeavouring to escape, overwhelmed by the opposite element. The British now seeing that they had completely destroyed those formidable batteries, with characteristic humanity endeavoured to rescue the remainder of their defenders; and captain Curtis and his gallant band, through great danger to themselves, saved the lives of about four hundred. Such was the signal and complete defensive victory obtained by a comparatively small handful of heroes, over the combined efforts and united powers by sea and land, of two great, warlike, and potent nations, who, sparing no expence nor exertion of art for the attainment of a favourite object, exceeded all former examples as well in the magnitude as the formidable nature of their preparations. The enemy being so totally disappointed in their sanguine expectations of taking this fortress by assault, now rested their sole hopes on the resumption of blockade, by preventing lord Howe from bringing the expected ammunition and provisions.

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1782.

They again
attempt a
blockade.

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1782.

Lord Howe
attempts to
supply and
relieve Gib-
raltar :

effects his
purpose in
the face of a
much supe-
rior fleet.

They professed ardently to wish for the arrival of the British fleet, and assured themselves of compensating their direful disasters by brilliant victory. On the 9th of October a violent storm dispersed the combined armament, and exposed them to imminent danger. Lord Howe having been retarded by contrary winds, did not arrive at the straits until the 11th of October: during the night a considerable part of the fleet having missed the bay of Gibraltar, entered the Mediterranean, and the next day the admiral followed to assemble the scattered ships, having left the Buffalo of sixty guns to collect the store-ships as they arrived in the bay, and also the Panther of the same force in the straits. On the 13th the combined fleet passed the straits with about forty-seven ships of the line, three of their men of war having been disabled by the tempest, and discovered lord Howe with thirty-two ships of the line off the coast of Grenada; next morning, however, they were out sight. The British admiral now sailing westward, sent his convoy safe into Gibraltar; it contained a reinforcement of troops, with plentiful supplies of ammunition and provisions of every sort for the garrison. The enemy did not make their appearance until after this great object of the expedition was completely effected. On the 19th of October, when lord Howe, being joined by the Buffalo and Panther, was with thirty-four ships entering into the gut of Gibraltar, he descried the enemy sailing from the north-east towards the straits, with the wind blowing fair from the Mediterranean. He thought it would be extremely imprudent, with so an inferior a force, to hazard an engage-

1782.

He offers
the enemy
battle,
which they
decline.

engagement in a dangerous road, well known to the enemy, but not to his fleet; he therefore proceeded to the open ocean. On the 21st of October, he descried the enemy following him at about five leagues to windward, and immediately formed a line of battle. The enemy having the wind in their favour, had their choice both of the time of action and the distance from which they should engage. At sun-set the combined fleets began a cannonade, which the British returned with such effect as to produce considerable damage, and to throw their antagonists into evident confusion. The French and Spanish admirals drew off their ships about ten at night; and in the morning they were seen at a great distance, sailing away in the direction of Cadiz. Several considerations prevented lord Howe from pursuing the enemy; he had effected the principal purpose of his command in relieving Gibraltar; he had been ordered to dispatch eight of his ships, after the relief of the garrison, to the West Indies: the force of the enemy was so superior as to render the issue of a battle extremely doubtful; and even if he should succeed, he was to expect his ships to be so much damaged as to disable them from proceeding to the other destined services. Lord Howe was too wise to fight merely for the sake of battle, and to incur certain danger without any definite object. He therefore proceeded to England, where, after having on his way detached part of his fleet to the West Indies, he arrived in safety with the rest. Thus in the protection of her coasts and trade, preventing the junction of the Dutch with the Bourbon fleets, and the relief of Gibraltar,

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1782.
General
purpose of
Bourbon
ambition
frustrated:
Britain re-
tains the
sovereignty
of the sea.

The belli-
gerent pow-
ers are at
length con-
vinced that
hostilities
are recipro-
cally
ruinous.

Britain effected the three great objects of the campaign 1782 in Europe. In the East and West Indies the schemes of our enemies had, as we have seen, proved equally abortive. A confederacy extending from the north sea to the Mediterranean, containing the three greatest naval states and almost all the maritime force of continental Europe, found their mighty efforts against the navy of England recoil on themselves.

The various contending parties at length began to see, that whatever partial advantages might be gained, the contest in which they were engaged tended to the general injury of all the belligerent powers. France had succeeded in separating the American colonies from Britain; but had been foiled in her principal purpose of obtaining naval and commercial supremacy. Her operations had been carried on at an enormous expence, which not only annihilated all the recent savings of her reforming œconomist, but infinitely exceeded her revenue, and overwhelmed her with new debt. The war which caused such unprecedented expenditure, had been far from producing any advantage likely to secure an eventual equivalent: her expectations of compensating present embarrassment, were becoming daily more hopeless. The confederacy in India was crumbling to pieces, and British superiority was again manifest: all her sanguine projects against the West Indies had fallen under the victorious arms of Rodney. and America, impoverished by her long and arduous struggle, was more likely to drain than to supply the treasure of her allies. Spain had engaged in the war as the tool of French ambition, which art-fully

fully playing on the weakness, personal prejudices, and vanity of the prince, dazzled him by splendid promises of Gibraltar and Jamaica, and thereby blinded him to his real interests, to which nothing could be more contrary than either the encouragement of revolt in American colonies, or hostilities with England. All her mighty and costly preparations against Gibraltar had fallen under Elliot's red-hot balls. From Rodney her schemes against Jamaica received a decisive defeat, her hopes of naval and commercial aggrandizement through the depression of England had perished, her ships had been captured, and her fleets overthrown. In four years, all her extraordinary exertions, all her waste of blood and treasure had conquered a defenceless province*, and captured an hospital†. America had succeeded in the contest, and attained the objects for which she fought; but she prevailed by efforts which drained her resources, by labours that required a respite as soon as it could be procured consistently with her public engagements. During her short warfare, Holland in the loss of her settlements, the seizure of her treasures, and the destruction of her trade, learned how dangerous it is for a state deriving its subsistence from commerce to provoke to war a neighbour that rules the ocean. Britain for the last five years had been engaged in a war to defend her maritime sovereignty; great as had been her collateral losses, she had on the whole maintained that grand object; but her defence, though manifesting her energy, had drained her resources; her expenditure was enormous, her debts and taxes had far exceeded

* West Florida.

† Minorca.

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Overtures
for a gene-
ral peace.The preli-
minary ar-
ticles are
signed.

the anticipation of even her most desponding politicians; trade was interrupted, difficulties and distress poignant and alarming; increasing demands, appeared to portend the derangement of her finances, and the downfall of her credit. From all these circumstances it was the interest of each party separately, and all jointly, to conciliate peace.

The determination lately avowed by England to acknowledge the independence of America, removed the most offensive obstacle to an accommodation, as the discomfiture of their designs dispelled the real objections of our European enemies. The empress of Russia and emperor of Germany, finding a pacificatory disposition in the belligerent powers, and that circumstances now admitted of its being carried into effect, offered themselves and were accepted as mediators. Soon after lord Shelburne became prime minister, the British government had sent Mr. William Windham Grenville, brother to the earl of Temple, to Paris, to pave the way for opening a negotiation in the proper form. These preliminaries being settled, Mr. Fitzherbert, envoy at Brussels, was appointed plenipotentiary to negotiate and conclude a peace with the ministers of France, Spain, and Holland. He accordingly proceeded to Paris in the beginning of November; Mr. Oswald, a merchant, was likewise dispatched to the French metropolis, as commissioner from his Britannic Majesty, for treating of peace with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Ray, and Henry Laurens, four of the commissioners nominated for the same purpose on the part of the united states of America. On the 30th of November, provisional articles were signed as the grounds
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of future peace: by this treaty the freedom, sovereignty, and independence of the thirteen united states was individually by name, and in the fullest and most express terms acknowledged, and every claim to their government, property, and territorial rights for ever relinquished by the crown of Britain. To prevent all future disputes about boundaries, several lines were drawn, which at is unnecessary to follow with geographical minuteness; it is sufficient to say that Britain retained Canada and Nova Scotia; and acknowledged all the territory southwards to Georgia inclusive, westward to the Ohio and Mississippi, and eastwards to the Atlantic ocean, to be independent: to the united states, so defined, she granted an unlimited right of fishery on the banks of Newfoundland, in the gulph of St. Lawrence, and all other places where both nations had heretofore been accustomed to fish. American creditors were to recover fair debts in sterling money: congress engaged to recommend to the legislators to restore all estates, rights, and properties, belonging to real British subjects, which had been confiscated; also of other loyalists who had not borne arms against the united states, and to treat with mildness all descriptions of loyalists. Congress farther engaged, that after the conclusion of the treaty, there should be no future confiscations, or prosecutions for having joined the British.

By the treaty with France, England extended the privilege of the French to fish on the banks of Newfoundland, and likewise ceded the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon in full right to France, and consequently without any restriction in point of fortifi-

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fortification. In the West Indies, England restored to France the island of St. Lucia; and ceded and guaranteed to her the island of Tobago. On the other hand, France restored to Britain, the island of Grenada, and the Grenadines, with St. Vincents, Dominica, St. Christophers, Nevis, and Montserrat. In Africa, England ceded to France the river of Senegal, with the forts and dependencies; and also the island of Goree. France guaranteed to England the river Gambia, and fort St. James. In India, England restored her acquisitions during the war; in return for which France, having made no conquest, could not give an equivalent in that country, and none was required in any other. In Europe, England agreed to the abrogation and suppression of all the articles relative to Dunkirk, from the treaty of peace concluded at Utrecht, in 1713, inclusively to the present time.

By the treaty with Spain, Great Britain ceded not only Minorca and West Florida, but also East Florida; and Spain on her part restored to Britain the Bahama islands. The preliminaries between Britain and Holland were not immediately signed, but until these should be adjusted a suspension of arms was established. It was afterwards agreed that, with regard to the honours of the flag, the same custom should be respectively followed as was practised before the war; the captured ships from each nation should be restored; and there should be a general restoration of all places taken, except Negapatam, which was to continue in possession of his Britannic majesty, until the Dutch should offer an equivalent. The Dutch engaged not to obstruct the navigation

of British subjects on the eastern seas ; and whereas disputes had risen between the African companies of the respective nations, it was agreed these should be referred to commissioners.

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The preliminaries between Britain, France, and America, were signed on or before the 21st of January 1783 ; and as an armistice soon, after followed by a treaty of peace, was at the same time established between Britain and Holland, we may from this time consider the war as finished.

Thus ended the American war ; in which all the nations that contended, however potent, their exertions or brilliant their several successes, yet were very great sufferers by the events. The American colonies, indeed, so far succeeded in their object as to render themselves an independent and separate community. The real advantage to accrue from this dismemberment was problematical and contingent ; to depend upon not only physical and moral causes, of which the operation and effect might be doubtful, but on a variety of circumstances and incidents which could not possibly be foreseen. One fact they could experimentally ascertain ; their revolutionary efforts had impoverished, devastated, and unpeopled the country. This was a notorious and glaring evil present, seen, and felt, the good was doubtful, and hitherto to be found only in anticipating imagination. Waving the question of abstract right, and considering only expediency, concerning the resistance of the Americans situated as they had been relatively to the mother-country ; policy and prudence could justify their repugnance to the acts of the British government, only

General review of this arduous contest.

only on the supposition that these tended to change their former happy situation, and to deprive them of their rights as freemen and British subjects. In this case, refusal to comply would not be a measure of choice, but to generous and magnanimous minds a dictate of necessity. There not only might be, but were many who conceived the Americans driven to hostilities at first, yet censured the unaccommodating spirit which refused the proffers of returning amity; and lamented the separation between children of the same origin. Britain was a greater loser by this contest than by any in which she had ever been engaged: thirteen provinces, before the unhappy dispute rapidly increasing not only their own prosperity, but the individual and national wealth, the defensive and offensive force of the parent state, were severed from it for ever. Through her quarrel with America, Britain had been involved in a complication of the most expensive and formidable wars; and a few years, nearly doubling her burthens, almost equalled the cost of a century. So far were these enormous sums from being expended in the reasonable hope of future indemnification, that they were a sacrifice of a great part of the public capital to preserve the existence of the nation. Heretofore Britain had fought for victory, now she contended for bare life; but all her dangers, difficulties, and distresses from the European confederacy had their origin in the contest with the American colonies; and here impartial history, without either impugning or supporting the alleged right of the Americans to tax themselves, justifying or condemning the policy of the principle and mode of asserting that right, must exhibit one general series of facts, tending

tending to impeach the wisdom of British counsels; every coercive measure, from the stamp-act downwards, produced a directly contrary effect to that which its abettors sought and proposed. The only soothing and conciliatory schemes adopted before the rupture, the plans of the marquis of Rockingham and lord North, in 1766 and 1770, in a great degree removed the evils which projects of imperious exaction had generated through most of the colonies; they restored the harmony which imperious dictation had disturbed; and the repeal of imposts reproduced that revenue which attempted taxation destroyed. Thus experience the most recent afforded strong reasons to conclude, that, to preserve the attachment of America, and profit by her industry, prosperity, and riches, the imposition of taxes must be laid aside. Strong, and general, and uniform, as the colonial expression of repugnance to taxation had been, and was, the British ministers conceived a notion that it was confined to the influence of a few factious demagogues*: such reports indeed they received from their own partial and interested adherents; on these they acted in the face of the plainest evidence of universal association; which to abhorrence of British taxation sacrificed every predilection of taste and habit for British commodities; and manifested individual, corporate, and confederate reprobation, both in word and deed, of pecuniary contribution without their own consent. Ministers still thought that the majority of the colonies was favourable to British impost. And here it must be admitted, that the abettors

* See vol. ii. passim.

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of the project as a scheme of beneficial policy, with the means of being thoroughly informed, were really ignorant of the state of the case concerning which they professed to reason and to plan. Originating in misapprehension, their conclusions were false, and their measures unwise and pernicious. The most partial admirers of lord North's administration would find it impossible to prove, or even plausibly to contend, that his schemes respecting America were founded in adequate knowledge, just deduction, or wise policy. But his enemies on the other hand must allow, though the propositions might be his, the enactment belonged to the whole legislature. The same imperfect information that marked the senatorial motions of ministers affected also their ex-ecutorial plans and directions. In addition to their favourite theory of the general attachment of the Americans to British supremacy, they adopted another hypothesis, that the colonists were cowards. On this speculation they formed their military arrangements, and to repress hostile resistance sent a very inadequate force. Their tardy projects of partial conciliation, and retained coercion, encouraged colonial confidence, without removing disaffection and resentment.

When war was inevitable, or at least could be avoided but by such concessions only as they deemed it incompatible with honour and duty to grant, its management became the object of consideration. Here the censure bestowed upon ministry so lavishly, after the first campaign, admits considerable modifications. The armies sent, and generals employed, afforded a moral probability of success. Sir William Howe was a man of high military character;

character; nor was it possible for government to select an officer from whom all ranks and parties could entertain more sanguine expectations. The troops in number, kind, and strength, were such as any statesman, reasoning from general principles and experience, compared with the hostile force, might very fairly infer to be adequate to the purpose. If the event of Howe's command proved very different, the detailed narrative must have shewn that it arose from causes not all chargeable on ministers. The substitution of Burgoyne in the place of Carleton, was a preference which had no foundation in their respective military characters. Whatever Burgoyne's talents might be, Carleton's opportunities of exertion, especially in that country, had been greater, and were crowned with success. The disasters of Burgoyne may certainly be charged, in a considerable degree, to the American minister, whether the failure was in the plan or the execution. Indeed the design of penetrating into Albany appeared to arise from a very general source of miscarriage in all the British schemes respecting America,—unfounded hopes of loyal co-operation. On the return of sir William Howe, the appointment of sir Henry Clinton was a measure that appeared fair and reasonable according to the usual course of military promotion. His character as an officer was unobjectionable, and he had been second in command. He was brave, perfectly acquainted with the details of tactical evolution, and the routine of military duty. How far he had genius adequate to the great and comprehensive schemes, rapid invention, and energetic operation, requisite in a commander in chief on a momentous service, may be

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fairly questioned. He certainly, on a very important occasion *, manifested a want of that sagacity which, penetrating the design of an antagonist, can anticipate and disconcert his plans, and baffle his efforts. Though prescription might point to Clinton as a successor to Howe, reason would have conferred the command upon lord Cornwallis. When war commenced with the house of Bourbon, the primary object of Britain was her navy. The conduct of this department, though branded by opposition with every reproachful epithet, whether considered in particular detail, or general result, appears not to deserve such unqualified censure. The great and broad fact is, the house of Bourbon directed their chief efforts to naval operations, and were joined both by recent subjects and former allies of Britain; yet all this confederated force could obtain no superiority over the navy of England. The fleet first furnished against France, equal in number, and consequently, according to the estimate of uniform experience, a match for the enemy, and the commander employed high in professional reputation, afforded well-grounded expectations of success. The disappointment which ensued could not be imputed to the want of a sufficiently powerful force. The escape of the French armament probably brought on the Spanish, and afterwards the Dutch war; and though in some particular instances trade might have been better protected, and certain warlike operations might have been more seasonably conducted, yet in general the commanders employed, and the armaments equipped, were adequate to the purposes of defence.

* See this vol. page 313.

and protection, which, against such an host of foes, was nearly the whole that could be expected.

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In the conduct of the war, neither military or naval plans, operations, or results, were so deserving of blame or regret, as the enormous profusion of the public money. If indeed we compare the expence, not with result of operations, but with the true measure, the means required and exerted, the end sought and attained, we find the excess of public money expended beyond public service done, to have been so enormous, as to afford probable grounds of suspecting, that the minister employed corrupt donative to purchase that parliamentary influence which he could not command by his abilities. Great however as were the burdens entailed upon Britain by the American war, the efforts which she exhibited when urged by necessity, manifested the extent and depth of her resources, the ability, skill, and valour of her national defenders, and the force of her national character. The American war, in its origin, was unwise; in its conduct, of a very mixed character; in its progress, frequently disastrous; in its result, injurious, but not dishonourable. The struggles to ward off calamity, the exertions to defend independence, manifested qualities, which, under wise direction and more invigorating energy, were fitted and destined not only to restore the national power and splendor, but to extend it far beyond the most glorious experience.

Our resistance to such a confederation manifested the immense resources of Britain, her lofty genius, and invincible spirit.

Holland, misled by a French faction to provoke war with a view of increasing her commerce, far from succeeding in her object, was deprived both of her actual trade, and a great portion of its

Folly of naval states provoking to hostilities the mistress of the ocean.

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former gains. When, according to her mercantile character, she struck a balance, she found the whole war account to be loss.

Spain, in the midst of silver and gold, poor, because void of industry, with every natural advantage of situation, soil, and climate, and the adventitious profits from her colonial possessions, being in that condition of dependence on her inventive and energetic neighbour, which indolence, listlessness, and inaction, in nations as well as individuals, must yield to ingenuity, activity, and enterprise; was by the war loaded with debts, to her overwhelming, because she had not in her character and spirit the means of extrication.

Consequences proximate and eventual to the respective parties.

But the most momentous evils of the American war have been experienced by France. That great and powerful nation has ever been a sufferer by wars with England: whatever special causes may have at different periods embroiled the two mightiest states of modern history, in the union of resources and character; the general principle on the side of the French has been maritime and commercial competition. In every one of these wars she has been disappointed, her existing navy and commerce impaired, and her naval and commercial resources diminished; the exertions intended to injure Britain failed: whereas, equal efforts of that ability and energy which she possesses in so eminent a degree, if employed in the peaceable improvement of her various resources, without wasteful expenditure, would have produced the commerce and opulence which she in vain sought by burdensome and ruinous wars. When at peace with England, she has flourished; when attempting
by

by war to atchieve maritime superiority, she was discomfitted, and not only expended the treasure of past peaceful industry, but anticipated future gains. Experience might have taught her, that the attempt to be the first in naval power could never be successful. Reflection might have convinced her, that without maritime supremacy, she, from her situation and character, might possess such an extent of commerce as would fully employ that department of national industry, and a sufficient naval force to protect it against the whole world, if she did not interfere with England. If she were susceptible of instruction from the lessons of experience, never could the hopelessness of seeking naval supremacy be more strongly impressed on her than by the American war. Never had Britain fought with so many disadvantages and impediments, yet she had retained the empire of the sea. The history, both of Spain and her own country, might have taught France the certain loss accruing to the maritime states from a contest with England. Provoking the naval efforts of this kingdom, Philip wasted much of that strength which had descended to his dominions from Charles V., and left his successors an easy prey to the efforts of France, who was then at peace with England, and exerted her forces where she was prepollent. Louis XIV. had rendered himself dictator of Europe, until he ventured a naval contest with England. La Hogue avenged Rocroi and the Downs: the victories of Condé and Turenne paved the way to Louis for governing the Christian world by his armies, if his fleets had avoided an encounter with Ruffel. As

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a naval war had always been injurious to France, her extraordinary efforts in that which was just ended exhausted her treasury, and deranged her finances much more than was immediately suspected; but fiscal embarrassments, great as they were, proved eventually only instrumental to much more formidable evils which accrued to France from the part that she acted in the American war. The principles which intercourse with American republicanism nourished, were much more mischievous to the French monarchy, than all the expences and losses which she had incurred; and, co-operating with doctrines before industriously spread, had a powerful efficacy in overturning the established constitution. The fall of the French monarchy, aristocracy, and hierarchy, if not caused, was rapidly accelerated by the American war.

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Administration of lord Shelburne—deficient in strength.—State of political parties.—Meeting of parliament.—Unusual length and particularity of his majesty's speech.—Mr. Fox details the reasons of his own resignation.—His party and lord North's concur in censuring ministers—their attacks indicate a concert of counsels—both reprobate the peace.—Ministers defend the peace as necessary in the exhausted state of our navy, army, and finances—and the terms the best that could be attained.—Famous coalition of lord North and Mr. Fox.—The coalition considered relatively to its leaders.—Vote of censure passed against ministers.—Great clamour against the coalition.—Ministers resign.—Ministerial interregnum.—The coalition come into office.—Duke of Portland first lord of the treasury.—Lord North and Mr. Fox secretaries of state.—Revival of commerce with America.—Mr. William Pitt proposes a specific plan of parliamentary reform.—Motion of the duke of Richmond respecting the great seal—combated by lord Loughborough.—Minute æconomical regulations.—George, prince of Wales—abilities and opening character—a separate establishment appointed for his highness.—India affairs—committee continues its investigations.—From the mass of evidence, Mr. Dundas exhibits a comprehensive statement of the situation of affairs, and of executorial conduct—proposes a bill for the regulation of British India—for the present postpones his plan.—Indian affairs first displayed the force and extent of Mr. Dundas's talents—which were before but partially known and comprehended.—Supplies.—New taxes.—Internal state of Britain at the peace.—Continental occurrences.

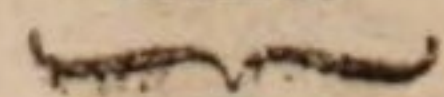
FROM the resignation of Mr. Fox and the adherents of the marquis of Rockingham, the classes which, though differing in certain opinions, had coincided in opposition to lord North's ministry,

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nistry, were now conceived to have become inimical parties. Lord Shelburne, the prime minister, was a man of considerable political knowledge, and particularly distinguished for his minute and detailed acquaintance with foreign affairs. He was, however, more noted for extent and exactness of intelligence, than for the formation of able and beneficial plans from the result. He was therefore, perhaps, less fitted for the supreme management in so trying and critical a situation, than for some secondary department, in which, from his abundant stores, he might have supplied materials for the operation of more energetic and less-experienced genius. In that view had he continued a member of the cabinet of which Mr. Fox was really the head, there is little doubt Britain would have possessed a ministry that, whatever its character might have been in other respects, at least would not have failed in efficacy. Lord Shelburne had attached himself to the illustrious Chatham, and after his decease was considered as the leader of his friends and connections, but did not greatly increase the number by his own personal influence. Far from overbearing party by genius like Chatham, he was not like many other ministers propped up by a confederacy. Lord Camden, lord Temple, and Mr. Dunning (now lord Ashburton), joined rather than followed Shelburne; lord Thurlow and Mr. Dundas took the same side, but to support government, more than from any approbation of its present chief minister. Mr. Dundas indeed had taken a grand and comprehensive view both of the country and political characters: reduced to distress
by

by the timidity and weakness of mature years, Britain, he conceived, must seek restoration from youthful wisdom. He very early supposed Mr. Pitt to be the man who must save his country as prime minister: Mr. Pitt himself was officially joined with lord Shelburne, but appears to have attended to the duties of his own department without entering into party projects and intrigues. Neither the number of those who supported the minister, nor the motives by which some of them were actuated, afforded a probability of permanency to lord Shelburne's administration. There were two other parties, both powerful and well compacted. The benevolent disposition and social qualities, the brilliant wit, pleasing humour, and engaging manners of lord North, had co-operated with political motives in attaching great numbers to his person and interests. No man had exerted himself more uniformly and effectually to serve his friends, and though not from all, he from many experienced that gratitude which was so pleasing to his benignant and affectionate heart. His party no longer possessed the masculine force of Thurlow, the close, powerful, and direct efforts of Dundas; nevertheless in lords Stormont and Carlisle, lord Loughborough and lord Mansfield, Messrs. Courtney, Anstruther, Adam, and Eden, and lord North himself, besides many others of respectable talents, he retained a formidable host of political strength. A less numerous, but still stronger and better compacted body, was that which the philosophic genius of Burke guided and instructed, the rapid and powerful energy of Fox invigorated and led: here shone deliberative and judicial

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is deficient
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judicial eloquence in their most brilliant lustre; here even Messrs. Erskine and Sheridan acted only second parts. There was besides this constellation of talent, the weight and interest of the whig aristocracy. Lord Shelburne was conscious that, without some accession of political strength, he would be incapable of retaining his situation, and despaired of a re-union with those from whom he had so lately separated; he therefore made overtures to the party which he had uniformly opposed. Mr. Pitt candidly bestowed a just tribute of praise on lord North, but declared his determination never to be a member of a ministry in which that statesman should bear a part. It may indeed be fairly inferred from the conduct of Mr. Pitt, that he thought it wiser to stand upon political talents and character, than to seek the props of coalitions and combinations. The intrinsic strength of lord Shelburne, however, was not so great as to preclude the necessity of extrinsic aid; the application therefore in him was commensurate in prudence with the desire of continuance in office, but it proved unavailing. Various reports were now spread concerning the intentions of both the respective parties and individual members, and all eyes were turned to the approaching meeting of parliament, wherein it was expected that the several objects and designs would be unfolded.

Meeting of
parliament.
Unusual
length and
particularity
of the king's
speech.

On the 5th of December 1782, his majesty opened the session in a speech of very great length, and comprehending an unusual extent, variety, and particularity of political disquisition. The introduction stated, that since the close of the last session,

sion, his majesty had been constantly employed in the care and attention which the important and critical conjuncture of affairs required; he had put an end to the prosecution of offensive war in America, and had entered into provisional articles for declaring the colonies independent. “In thus (his majesty said) admitting their separation from the crown of these kingdoms, I have sacrificed every consideration of my own to the wishes and opinion of my people. I make it my humble and earnest prayer to almighty God, that Great Britain may not feel the evils which might result from so great a dismemberment of the empire, and that America may be free from those calamities which have formerly proved, in the mother-country, how essential monarchy is to the enjoyment of constitutional liberty.” He went over the principal operations of the campaign, and bestowed the merited praise on the defence of Gibraltar, and other glorious and beneficial efforts. He mentioned the advanced state of the negotiations for peace, at the same time the necessity of being prepared, lest from any unforeseen cause they might be frustrated. To the house of commons he particularised a variety of œconomical regulations in the expenditure of the army and the civil list, and other reductions; and recommended to parliament an attention to the price of corn, that year unusually high. He extolled the liberality with which the rights and commerce of Ireland had been established, and advised a revision of our whole trading system upon the same comprehensive principles; and, lastly, urged some fundamental regulations of our Asiatic territories.

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territories. Though no opposition was made to the address in either house, yet severe animadversions were passed upon the speech in both. The recognition of American independence was censured upon two very opposite grounds. By the supporters of lord North it was severely condemned as having done much more than was necessary ; and by Mr. Fox's party, as not having done enough. Lord Stormont reprobated an unqualified surrender of the whole, without obtaining a truce, or even a cessation of hostilities, as the price of so lavish a concession. In the most abject and unfortunate reign that Spain ever knew (that of Philip III.), the negotiators of that prince retained ten out of seventeen of the revolted provinces, and detached the rest from their alliance with France ; yet by Britain the whole had been conceded, without any attempt to procure more favourable terms. Mr. Fox censured ministers for having made the independence of America conditionally to depend on a conclusion of a peace with France, instead of being absolute. A dispute on this subject, he informed the house, was one of the reasons which had compelled him to resign his late office. It had been uniformly his opinion, that the unconditional recognition of independence was the interest of Britain, because such an acknowledgment would dispose America to end the war as speedily as possible, and would tend essentially to accelerate a general peace. Finding himself out-voted in the cabinet on this question, he had thought it his duty to quit his situation. Mr. Fox's explanation of his reasons for retiring from office were by no means satisfactory to the public ;

Mr. Fox details the reasons of his late resignation.

public: it was not considered as the part of a patriot to withdraw himself from the service of his country, merely because a measure proposed by him was not adopted; it was conceived, that his extraordinary abilities, employed in the cabinet, might have rendered essential service to his country, whether the recognition of American independence were conditional or absolute. The real motives of his conduct were very generally construed to be dissatisfaction with the appointment of lord Shelburne to that office which he wished to be held by a distinguished member of the whig party.

Until the recess, the attention of both houses was chiefly employed in motions for the production of papers respecting the negotiation, which were negatived on the ground of being premature until the treaty should be brought to a close.

Parliament met after the Christmas holidays, on the 21st of January 1783: the preliminary articles of peace between Great Britain and France having been signed at Versailles, were laid before legislature on the 27th of January, and the 17th of February was appointed for taking them into consideration. Lord North and Mr. Fox had both very frequently censured administration: their animadversions had arisen from professedly different principles: there had been no appearance of concert either in their attacks upon ministers or any other measures. The discussion of the peace manifested a systematic regularity of procedure, a selection of parts in the debate, and a concurrence of principles of reasoning and of particular arguments, which were too striking to be the result of accident, and obviously intimating a concert

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his party
and lord
North's
concur in
censuring
ministers:

their attacks
indicate a
concert of
counsels:

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both repro-
bate the
peace.Ministers
defend the
peace as
necessary in
the state of
the army,
navy, and
finances;

cert between two parties so long totally inimical to each other. Mr. Thomas Pitt moved an address to his majesty, expressing a high approbation of the peace. Lord John Cavendish, as speaker for the whig party, proposed an amendment, which should contain no opinion on the merit of the peace, but declare their resolution to bestow on it that serious and full attention which the importance of the subject deserved; but pledge themselves, whatever conclusion they might draw from the investigation of the terms, that they should invariably adhere to the articles which his majesty had stipulated. Lord North moved a second amendment, expressive of the regard due from the nation to the loyalists who had suffered so much in supporting the cause of Great Britain. The ministerial speakers defended the peace; first, as necessary in the circumstances of the country; and, secondly, as favourable in point of terms. Our finances, our navy, and our army, they contended, were in so deplorable a state as to render the continuance of the war ruinous. To maintain this position respecting pecuniary resources, they entered into a detailed account of incumbrances and expenditure. The national debt, funded and unfunded, amounted to upwards of two hundred and fifty millions. The annual interest, together with the necessary expence of a peace establishment, was fully equal to all the revenue which the people, groaning already under the load of taxes, could afford. Our navy, so far from being adequate to the purposes of offensive competition with the combined fleets of Europe, was scarcely sufficient for effectual defence. Our fleet

fleet did not exceed a hundred sail of the line, while the armaments of France, Spain, and Holland, amounted to a hundred and seventy sail of the line. By continuing merely defensive war we could gain nothing, and consequently could not expect by another campaign to obtain a better peace. The army was still more inferior to the armies of our enemies, and totally inadequate to farther contest. These general positions they illustrated by a detailed account of our force in various parts of the world. Our most brilliant successes had been merely defensive, and only enabled us to retard the progress of the enemy. From this view of total inability to engage in another campaign with a prospect of bringing it to a more favourable conclusion, it was argued, that peace, on any terms, would break the powerful confederacy, and give us time to recruit our wasted strength; and therefore was preferable to a continuance of the war. But it was further contended, that the conditions of the peace were advantageous. One of the chief objections to the treaty was the participation allowed the French in the Newfoundland fishery; but this, called by opposition a cession, was by ministers argued to be only the definition and limitation of a right which always had been exercised by France, and formerly, from being indefinite, was the source of perpetual contention. The space to which France was now limited, was very inconsiderable both in extent and productiveness in comparison of the coast which Britain possessed. The islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, ceded to France, were only a restitution of what had belonged to her before the preceding

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could be
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ing war; and so far were these places from admitting fortifications that could annoy our fishery in a future war, the most skilful engineers had certified, that neither island would admit the construction of a fortress which could stand the attack of the smallest of our frigates. During the detail of the various cessions in the West, Africa, and the East Indies, they endeavoured to prove that they were really of little importance. The articles of the treaty of Utrecht, respecting Dunkirk, had never been enforced, and were not now designed to be executed; their abrogation therefore could not be detrimental to England. France desired their suppression as a point of honour; and by compliance we gratified the other party, without incurring any loss ourselves. East and West Florida and Minorca, which were now yielded to Spain, had already cost this country much more than they brought, and were besides balanced by the restitution of the Bahama islands and Providence. The article most strongly censured was, the terms procured for the loyalists. In answer to those, it was said, that congress was invested with no power over the property of the several states: a recommendation to the provincial assemblies was all which their constitutional authority permitted them to undertake; but whatever weight could be justly allowed to any of the objections against the concessions, the supporters of the peace contended, that either severally or jointly, they were of no moment when balanced with the evils of continuing the war. Having endeavoured to defend the peace, both on the grounds of general expediency and particular conditions, they next proceeded to the motives of
their

their opponents; they asserted, that an union of professed tories and professed whigs, who for so many years had been abusing and reviling each other, must arise from some different reason than mutual agreement of political opinion. The following was the account which they gave of this unexpected confederation: lord North's party had long experienced the advantages of office, but at the same time had been exposed to the forcible attacks of Mr. Fox, and the whig confederacy of which he had become a member; they now sought to regain the benefits without suffering the annoyance; Mr. Fox and his co-adjutors conceived that their favourite plan of governing by a combination was more certainly practicable by extending its objects; and both parties found it expedient to sacrifice all animosity and professed reprobation to reciprocal interest; the peace was merely a pretext for joining the parties, in order to force their way into administration. The event so far justified this interpretation, that the new confederacy outvoted ministers, and the amendments were carried in the house of commons by a considerable majority.

When this coalition was reported abroad, it was first received with a mixture of doubt and astonishment. Many of the sanguine admirers of Mr. Fox, who had been accustomed to receive his orations, not merely as effusions of genius, but as oracles of truth, conceived lord North to be as bad, as malignant, and diabolical, as Mr. Fox, in the rapidity of invention, prompted by passion, and borne away by fancy, chose to represent his antagonist. These could not at first believe that he asso-

Famous
coalition of
lord North
and Mr.
Fox.

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The coalition considered relatively to its leaders, and objects.

ciated with a man whom he taught them to consider as a weak and wicked minister; but when they found that a coalition had taken place, they turned, against the late object of their idolatry, a resentment proportioned to their recent adoration. Discerning and impartial men, estimating the merits of a coalition in such circumstances, laid little stress on the violent expressions which, in the paroxysms of impassioned eloquence, Mr. Fox had employed; but they examined the history of his planned and deliberative proceedings. The principal points of difference between lord North and Mr. Fox were not speculative opinions, but practical conduct. He had for a series of years declared the measures and policy of lord North to be such as to demonstrate incapacity, corruption, profligacy, and every quality in a minister that was ruinous to the country over which he presided. He had not confined himself to imputation of folly and weakness, but had alleged the highest criminality. With lord North, whom, in 1782, he had declared, deserving of death for the wickedness of his administration, Mr. Fox, in 1783, declared himself ready to co-operate in administration. If Mr. Fox represented lord North as the weakest and blackest of men, believing him to be otherwise, what confidence was to be reposed in any of his future declarations? If he before believed him to be so bad as he represented, what had happened in that short time to change his opinion? What had lord North done when out of office to approve himself to Mr. Fox fit for being minister, when, in office, declared by him to be fit only for the block? These were questions which impartial men naturally asked, in order to determine

mine how far it was proper to receive the professions of Mr. Fox. Equal blame was by no means attached to lord North ; he had never declared any opinion against the political talents or character of Mr. Fox. There was, therefore, no inconsistency in coalescing with him as a statesman, provided the objects to be sought, and the means to be employed by that combination, were meritorious ; and these soon appeared, though not in their full extent. A very short time manifested the intention of the coalition to be, through their paramount influence in the house of commons, to dictate to his majesty the choice of ministers, which is left by the constitution of the country to his own discretion. This purpose was much more incompatible with the long-professed principles of lord North, than with the recent principles and doctrines of Mr. Fox. Indeed, lord North and Mr. Fox, able as they were by nature, and conversant from experience and situation in the politics of the country, appeared to have considered the constitution partially rather than completely. They could neither be said to be supporters of the whole system, nor of the balances on which its perfection depends. Lord North was a partisan of the monarchical, and Mr. Fox of the popular, department. The former, however, now joined with the latter in extending the power of the commons, by reducing the power of the crown. Thus a coalition with lord North, FOR ANY PURPOSE TO BE EFFECTED BY POLITICAL ABILITIES AND INTEGRITY, was totally inconsistent with the very often repeated professions of Mr. Fox. *This specific object* of the coalition was no less incompatible with the uni-

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The coalition controverts the arguments of ministers in favour of the peace.

Grand views of Fox on public credit,

formly declared principles of lord North. Mr. Fox could not, consistently, coalesce with lord North as a statesman; lord North could not, consistently, coalesce with any man to reduce the kingly prerogative.

Having rejected the motion for approving the peace, the coalition party next proceeded to a positive censure. On the 21st of February, it was moved, that the concessions granted by the peace to the enemies of Britain, were greater than either the actual situation of their respective possessions, or their comparative strength, entitled them to receive. In support of this proposition they followed the order of their adversaries, and endeavoured to prove by detailed accounts, that the finances, the army, and navy, were not in the reduced state alleged by ministers; that the concessions were much more important than they pretended; and also, that they might have been prevented. In speaking on our financial situation, Mr. Fox, with great force and effect, exposed the absurdity of economists supposing specific limits to our national credit. "Speculative politicians (he said) have in all times been fond of circumscribing the bounds of public credit, and drawing a line beyond which they imagine it cannot be stretched; but repeated experience has shewn, that such ideas are, for the most part, imaginary and chimerical. National credit is relative to the result of private and public ability and industry. It is impossible, therefore, to fix the line beyond which it cannot extend, without, at the same time, marking the bounds of that ability and industry." The navy Mr. Fox declared to be in a flourishing state, and to have been competent in the late

late campaign to every purpose of offence and defence. It was, however, the same that had been equipped under lord Sandwich ; and for the ruinous state of which this orator had attacked the first lord of the admiralty, the year before, with such bitter severity. His general arguments against the present ministry proceeded on an assumption, that our resources were in a flourishing state : we certainly were neither richer nor stronger within the last ten months ; his reasoning, therefore, contained a virtual admission, that his charges against the former ministry of having utterly ruined the country, were totally unfounded. Mr. Fox displayed skilful dexterity in his defence of the coalition : he kept aloof from the principles and objects of the present combination, and exerted his eloquence in impressing a general position, that union between individuals and parties formerly inimical, was often meritorious ; and that such junctions frequently had been effected in this country, to the very great advantage of the nation. Impartial observers saw that the obvious truth of this general assertion proved nothing respecting the merit or demerit of this particular coalition. The question being called for, the motion for censuring ministry was carried in the affirmative, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-four to two hundred and eight. In the house of lords a similar proposition was negatived.

In consequence of the censure of the commons, lord Shelburne resigned his office. The chancellor of the exchequer declared publicly in the house that he only held his place until a successor should be appointed. During the whole month of March,

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there

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The commons pass a vote of censure on ministers.

Ministers resign.

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Ministerial
interreg-
num.

there was a ministerial interregnum: the reasons which the one side alleged for this delay were the mutual jealousy that still subsisted between the coalesced parties, and the difficulties which they found in adjusting their several pretensions; others asserted that the court wished to retain the abilities of the lord chancellor, and that Mr. Fox's party insisted on the exclusion of that illustrious character. The adherents of the coalition professed to think that the sovereign was endeavouring to use his own prerogative, by forming a ministry without regard to the newly established connection. During this time the kingdom was without any responsible government; with the finances neglected, the military establishments un-reduced, and the negotiations with foreign powers, which the critical conjuncture of affairs rendered peculiarly important, entirely at a stand. During this interval, various inquiries were made in the house concerning pensions which had been recently granted. On discussing the particulars, however, the coalition members found that no plausible objections could be maintained to the several grants of the late ministers. Mr. Coke, member for Norfolk, gave notice that he meant in the course of the following week to move an address to his majesty to urge the formation of a new ministry. The king ordered the duke of Portland and lord North to lay before him a sketch of their proposed arrangements; but nothing conclusive having been determined, Mr. Coke, on the 24th, made the promised motion, in the discussion of which there was a considerable degree of personal invective. The opposite party, comprehending several inde.

independent country gentlemen, attacked the coalition. One gentleman proposed to add to the address the exclusion of all those who had been comprised in Mr. Fox's motion in the former year, declaring the incapacity of his present associates; "that his majesty should please not to nominate or appoint any person or persons to fill up the vacant departments, *who by their mismanagement of public affairs, and want of foresight and abilities, when they were in office, had lost the confidence of the people.**"

The coalition retorted these sarcastic attacks, by repeating the vote of censure on the late ministry; they also revived the charges against secret advisers of the crown. To these Mr. Fox imputed the delay in forming the new administration; and became so pointedly personal, as to call up Mr. Jenkinson, who acknowledged that he had been in conference with the king more than once: as a privy counsellor, he was bound to give his advice when asked; he had done so to the best of his judgement, but never had obtruded his counsel. The proposed address was carried; and his majesty answered, that his earnest desire was to do every thing in his power to comply with the wishes of his faithful commons. On the 31st of March, Mr. Pitt informed the house that he had that day resigned his office; but no new minister having been appointed, the coalition proposed fresh motions in order to hasten the completion of the arrangements.

* The words inserted in Italics are extracted from a motion of Mr. Fox, in 1782, against lord North and his colleagues.

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The coalition come
into office.The duke of
Portland is
first lord of
the treasury;
lord North
and Mr. Fox
are secretaries of state.Revival of
commerce
with America.

On the 20th of April, a new administration was announced, of which the following were the principal members : the duke of Portland was first commissioner of the treasury ; lord North, secretary of state for the home department ; Mr. Fox, secretary for the foreign ; lord John Cavendish, chancellor of the exchequer ; lord viscount Keppel, first commissioner of the admiralty ; lord viscount Stormont, president of the council ; the earl of Carlisle, privy seal : the great seal was put into commission, the first in the nomination being lord loughborough ; the earl of Hertford was appointed chamberlain, and the earl of Dartmouth steward of the household ; lord viscount Townshend was made master-general of the ordnance ; Mr. Burke, paymaster-general ; Mr. Charles Townshend, treasurer of the navy ; Mr. Fitzpatrick, secretary of war ; Mr. Wallace and Mr. Lee had the offices of attorney and solicitor general ; and the earl of Northington was appointed to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland.

The first business that engaged the attention of the new ministers was to open a commerce with North America. By the prohibitory acts which had been passed during the revolt, all communication with that country, in the way of trade, was entirely precluded ; it was the prevailing opinion in parliament, that those acts were virtually repealed by the acknowledgement of the independence of the United States ; nevertheless in their new character they became subject to other restrictions which it was necessary to relax and modify. A bill for this purpose had been brought into the house of commons by the late ministry, but during the great variety of discussions which it underwent, difficulties

difficulties of such a complicated and important nature had arisen, that it never got through the committee. In the mean time, no regulations whatever having been stipulated by the treaty of peace, the commercial interests of the country were suffering very materially; for not only a great number of vessels richly freighted for America, were detained in the harbour, but there was a considerable danger of having the market pre-occupied by our rivals. In this emergency, the new ministers thought it most advisable to drop the whole bill for the present, and to pass two short laws, one to repeal all the prohibitory acts, the other to remove the necessity of requiring manifests or other documents, and to lodge in the king and council, for a limited time, a power to make such regulations as might be expedient.

On the 7th of May, Mr. William Pitt made a motion respecting the reform of parliamentary representation; the mode intended last year of examining the subject by a committee was accounted too general, he therefore designed to bring forward specific propositions. The object of the first was to prevent bribery at elections, the second proposed to disfranchise a borough which should be convicted of gross corruption; but that the minority of voters should be entitled to a vote for the county in which such boroughs should be situated: his third proposition was, that an augmentation of the knights of shires, and representatives of the metropolis, should be added to the state of the representation. He left the number for future discussion, but said he should recommend one hundred. The arguments both for
and

Mr William
Pitt pro-
poses a
specific plan
of reform.

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Motion of
the duke of
Richmond
respecting
the great
seal.

is combatted
by lord
Loughbo-
rough.

and against a parliamentary reform were nearly the same as in the preceding session, but the supporters constituted a smaller proportion; the majority against the reform were two hundred and ninety-three to one hundred and forty-nine. On the 8th of June, the duke of Richmond introduced a motion respecting the great seal being put into commission. The appointment of judges (he alleged) commissioners, with large salaries and perquisites dependent on the will of the crown, tended to invalidate acts for securing the independency of the judicative officers: to ensure this great object it was necessary, he contended, first, that the tenure of their offices should be certain; secondly, that the amount of their salaries should be ascertained, and thus the temptations arising from fear of removal, or hopes of greater gain, would be prevented. His grace, by a metaphysical disquisition on the nature of the passions, shewed that hope and fear were such powerful affections, as often to overcome justice and rectitude; and having argued in support of his motion concerning the great seal, he proceeded to some general observations on the incompatibility of the situation of a judge and a statesman, and endeavoured to support his reasonings by the authority of writers on political government. From his arguments and authorities he inferred, that neither the lords chief justices, nor lords chancellors, ought to sit in the house of peers. Lord Loughborough replied to his grace in a speech which was esteemed equal to any that ever was delivered, even by its author himself. The motion, he argued, proceeded on a visionary speculation, the mover had stated no actual

actual grievance; but had proposed redress. The best and only test of political truth was experience; the practice had often obtained of putting the seals into commission; the judges had long sitten in parliament, no evil or inconvenience had been experienced in the administration of justice from their voice in the legislature, and most important benefit had accrued to parliament from their legal and judicial ability and knowledge. These were strong and striking facts not to be controverted by vague observations on the nature of hope and fear; such disquisitions belonged to the schools; legislatures rarely or never adopted them, but contented themselves with the application of law to any ill habit of the mind, as it became predominant, and inconvenient to the just and rational ends of government. A theory, professing to have for its object a practical corrective and improvement, should shew what is amiss, and point out the manner in which it is to be reformed: on these grounds the motion was rejected. During this session a bill passed both houses for removing and preventing all doubts which had arisen, or might arise, concerning the exclusive right of the parliament and courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature; and for preventing any writ of error or appeal from any of his majesty's courts in the sister kingdom from being received, heard, and adjudged in any of his majesty's tribunals in Britain. Before the judicial and legislative independence of Ireland had been recognized, it was usual to remove causes by a writ of error from the Irish courts to the British. An appeal of this sort was before the

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Minute re-
gulations of
æconomy.George,
prince of
Wales,abilities and
character of.

the court of kings bench when the last settlement was made; the chief justice considering it necessary to proceed with pending suits, had given a judgment: this procedure, though unavoidable on the part of his lordship, had excited violent clamours in Ireland. To pacify these they proposed the present bill, though really implied in the general arrangement of the former year. A variety of œconomical regulations took place, more numerous than important. The objects, indeed, were the minute departments of public offices, such as salaries of clerks and their deputies, but no plan was proposed for diminishing the momentous departments of national expence.

George, prince of Wales, had now reached the years of manhood; and his age and dignified rank called for a separate establishment, as a measure agreeable to the uniform practice respecting the heir of the crown, while his personal character, his talents and accomplishments, rendered it additionally desirable that he should be placed in a situation in which he could more fully exhibit the elegance of his taste, the dignified and engaging gracefulness of his manners, the beneficent generosity of his disposition, his liberal patronage of merit, and his many other princely virtues. His highness in his early youth had attended little to party distinction, but gay and animated, intelligent, erudite, and refined, he had sought pleasure and wit, information, ability, and taste, wherever they were to be found. He was particularly captivated by the open, liberal, and impressive manners, and the social qualities of Mr. Charles Fox, while he admired the unassuming greatness

greatness of his character. The habits of that gentleman were also peculiarly attractive to youth; he was no austere ascetic, he was pleasurable and gay; in point of frolic and indulgence, at thirty such a companion as suited the ideas of eighteen. Through Mr. Fox, his highness came to associate often with the wit of a Hare and a Sheridan, and sometimes with the wisdom of a Burke. The party now in power was considered as most agreeable to his highness; but the proposal for the establishment was received with unanimity by all. It was found, on considering the royal message, that his majesty required only a temporary aid of sixty thousand pounds for the equipment of the prince, and that he meant to settle fifty thousand a year on his highness from the civil list. The sum desired was immediately voted, and an address of thanks presented to his majesty.

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A separate establishment is appointed for his highness.

Indian affairs continued this year to occupy the unremitting attention of the two committees; but from the unsettled state of government, during a considerable part of the session, no important measures were adopted either for redressing the grievances, or investigating the delinquency stated in the reports, or forming systems for the future regulation of Indian affairs. Mr. Dundas having in the secret committee, investigated an immense mass of evidence, oral and written, in April 1782, exhibited a clear and connected detail of the state and the history of India, from the establishment of the new system of 1773; the real interests of the company, the general laws and successive special directions transmitted to the company's servants for the preservation

Indian affairs:

the committees continue their investigations.

Mr. Dundas exhibits a comprehensive statement of affairs, and of executive conduct.

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vation and promotion of those interests ; the actual conduct of the principal servants and their subordinate agents, and the existing situation of those settlements. From these multiform, numerous, and complicated materials, the energetic and simplifying mind of Mr. Dundas educed the general principles in two great propositions. There was very gross mismanagement, which it became the deliberative wisdom of the legislature to correct, and also to devise means of improving the resources to the highest advantage. There was likewise an appearance of misconduct and misdemeanors, which it behoved judicial inquiry to examine. For these purposes he proposed that a committee of the whole house should sit upon the affairs of India. The two principal objects of inquisitorial procedure, stated by Mr. Dundas, were sir Thomas Rumbold, governor of Madras, and Warren Hastings, esq. governor-general of Bengal. Having in a variety of propositions drawn the outline of Mr. Hastings's alleged conduct, he moved a severe censure on the proceedings of the governor-general, and his co-adjutor in council Mr. Hornsby ; and a declaration that it was the duty of the directors to recal them from India*. He also moved a bill of pains and penalties against sir Thomas Rumbold, on various charges of speculation, corruption, and disobedience of the company's orders ; violation of treaties, assumption of undue powers, and deterioration of the company's interest for his own private emolument and that of his underlings : he moreover charged that officer with having bestowed

* The directors passed a resolution for the recal, which was afterwards overturned by the court of proprietors.

iniquitous

iniquitous grants on the nabob of Arcot ; by injustice and faithlessness provoked, for his own avaricious purposes, the enmity of the Nizam, and thereby endangered the possessions of the company. As it was just and necessary that, before the bill should be passed, the accused should be heard in his own defence, and the subject was very extensive and intricate, by the prorogation of parliament, in July, it was necessarily postponed to the following session. So much of the session of 1783, was consumed in the debates between the parties, that it was late before sir Thomas Rumbold occupied a great share of their attention. Mr. Dundas persevered in supporting the charges against Rumbold, and controverting his defence. But towards the close of the session, the committee of the house was so thinly attended, and appeared so little concerned to ascertain the merits of the case, that the prosecutor deemed farther procedure hopeless, and agreed to a motion for postponing the consideration to a period when he knew parliament would not be sitting ; and thus virtually abandoned the charge. In this session he proceeded to his second great object of more permanent consequence, the formation of a plan for the better management of the government in India, and brought in a bill for the purpose. The principal objects of this proposition were, to invest the governor-general with a discretionary power to act against the will of the council, whenever he should think it necessary for the public good ; to allow the subordinate governors a negative on every proposition, till the determination of the supreme council should be known ;

He proposes
a bill for the
regulation
of British
India.

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For the present postpones his plan.

Indian affairs first displayed the force and extent of Mr. Dundas's talents,

which were before but partially known and comprehended.

to secure to the zemindars or landholders of Hindostan, a permanent interest in their respective tenures; to cause the debts of the rajah of Tanjore and of the nabob of Arcot to be carefully examined; to put an end to the oppressions of the latter, and the corrupt practices of his creditors, by securing to the rajah the full and undisturbed enjoyment of his kingdom; lastly, to recal governor Hastings, prevent the court of proprietors from acting in opposition to the sense of parliament, and to nominate a new governor-general. For this important office Mr. Dundas recommended the earl Cornwallis. Ministers intimated their disapprobation of some parts of this scheme, and also declared an intention of proposing a plan early in the following session; wherefore Mr. Dundas did not urge his bill.

The consideration of Indian affairs first afforded to Mr. Dundas an opportunity of completely exhibiting the powers and habits which combine to render him at once great and beneficial. During the administration of lord North, his abilities were but imperfectly known, because occasion had admitted of only partial exertion. He was distinguished as a clear, direct, and forcible reasoner; but he had not yet shewn his abilities as a statesman. In the Indian inquiry he manifested the most patient, constant, and active industry to investigate; penetrating acuteness to discover the nature and situation of affairs; enlarged views to comprehend their tendency; fertile and energetic invention to devise regulations both for correction and improvement. Mr. Dundas, indeed, when in opposition to ministers whose means of procuring their offices he did not approve,

approve, was far from considering invectives against administration as the chief business of a member of parliament. He planned and proposed himself, much oftener than he censured the propositions and schemes of others.

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The supplies of this year having been voted before the reduction of the army, were nearly the same as in the former year: twelve millions were raised by a loan, the terms of which were severely censured by opposition, and defended by ministers on the ground of necessity. The new taxes were additional duties on bills of exchange, probates of wills, and legacies on bonds and law proceedings, and on stage coaches and diligences; also new imposts on certificates of marriages, births, and christenings; licences for vending medicines, waggons and other commercial and agricultural carriages, on turnpike-road and inclosure bills, on agreements and awards. The most important in its effects upon public opinion, and the popularity of ministers, was the receipt tax. This duty was perfectly agreeable to the principles of revenue, as it levied money in proportions founded on the extent of pecuniary transactions, by which it was to be presumed, the parties, if they acted judiciously, were deriving a benefit which could afford the respective rates. It was approved by able and candid financiers of all parties, both in and out of parliament: yet applying to transfers and other mercantile concerns that were recurring every day, hour, and minute, contravening former habits and constant practice, it was infinitely more disrelished by

Supplies.

New taxes.

The receipt
tax.

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The session
terminates.Internal
state of Bri-
tain at the
peace.

the people, than a partial, oppressive, and exorbitant impost, that would have been raised at stated and distant periods, and thus not perpetually press itself on the recollection and senses.

A session, much more remarkable for debate than enactment, was terminated on the 16th of July, by a speech shorter and more general than usual. The complicated discussions between the late belligerent powers had prevented the definitive terms of peace from being finally settled; but his majesty had no doubt of their speedy conclusion. The affairs of the East Indies would require their early meeting in the following season. Meanwhile the king recommended to them to employ their influence in their respective districts in promoting a spirit of industry, regularity, and order, as the true sources of revenue and power to the nation.

The events of Britain, either foreign or domestic, during the recess of 1783, were of little importance compared with those which the history has presented in recording the struggles of an arduous contest; the energy of war had ceased, the industry and enterprise of peace were not begun. The nation in the interval of action, seemed to be in a state of languor, from which it could be roused only by very strong stimulatives. Trade was stagnant, taxes, compared with the supposed resources of the country, enormous; the national debt doubled in eight years, appeared overwhelming. Depression of situation and spirits, reciprocally increased each other, by action and reaction; distress encouraged despondency, despondency precluded exertion and enterprise,

enterprise, the only effectual means of alleviating and removing distresses. Occupied chiefly by party contention, the legislature had, in the late session, devised no effectual means for the improvement of the peace: the present administration, however able many of its members actually were, did not possess the confidence of the majority of the people; and extrication from melancholy circumstances was not expected from their counsels. To these political causes of gloomy retrospect and forebodings, the present, though temporary, pressure of scarcity added its distresses. The crops of 1782 had been extremely deficient in all parts of these realms, and having been also unproductive on the continent, had much diminished the usual sources of importation. The wants of the poor concurring with so many other incentives to discontent, produced great disturbances and riots in various parts of the country. In several places, especially puritanical districts of Scotland, enthusiasm contributed its share to the disorders. The anti-popish societies still continued to exist among the very lowest orders; in the abhorrence of the Romish church great numbers of mechanics and manufacturing journeymen avowed their displeasure against that government by which they affirmed popery to be impiously protected. They insulted and outraged the magistracy, attacked the military, and even killed several soldiers. Their zeal becoming more eccentric and extravagant, they branched out into various sects, which, whatever might be the peculiar chimeras of their phrenzy, concurred in disavowing allegiance, every moral obligation and duty, if they conceived them

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to interfere with their theological notions*. One sentiment they appeared to have borrowed from the fifth monarchy-men of Cromwellian celebrity, that *all things are lawful unto the saints*. A relaxation of order manifested itself in a variety of crimes, especially around the metropolis. Theft and forgery were extremely frequent, robbery became more daring and atrocious, murder and barbarity, formerly so rare among English depredators, now abounded; the increase of depravity was great and alarming.

Settlement
of Genevese
emigrants.

The national and public acts of the country at this season, were chiefly the evacuation of America on the 3d of September; and the preliminaries between Britain and the States General were also subscribed the same day. This year a commotion in a distant state produced a considerable accession of arts and industry to his majesty's dominions; certain alterations having been proposed in the constitution of the illustrious though small republic of Geneva, a great proportion of the inhabitants were so averse to the changes, that they determined to emigrate, and appointed commissioners to collect information concerning asylums wherein they might enjoy the greatest security, and be able to improve to the best advantage their resources of property and character. In the beginning of 1783 these commissioners ar-

* The reader will find in the Gentleman's Magazine, and other periodical works for the year 1783, details and documents which fully authenticate and support this general account; especially Gentleman's Magazine, p. 249 and 340; London Magazine, p. 88; and Morning Chronicle, repeatedly, under the signature of a Scotch Highlander.

rived in Dublin, and were received with affectionate kindness by the hospitable and generous Irish. The delegates of the volunteer corps of the province of Leinster, unanimously resolved, that the inhabitants of Geneva, who sought refuge from oppression and tyranny, deserved the highest commendation; and that such of them as established themselves in that country should always receive the warmest support. The commissioners applied to government for its sanction to the desired settlement; and the lord lieutenant was empowered by his majesty to signify not only his royal approbation and assurance of protection and regard, and the enjoyment of such privileges as would contribute to their welfare and prosperity; but to promise also pecuniary assistance to enable them to execute the projected emigration and establishment. Their commissioners were requested to detail the privileges and regulations which they wished to be granted to their intended place of residence; and were told, that after being approved by his majesty's law servants, they should be extended into a charter. It was recommended to the commissioners to examine, with all expedition, a situation for their new town; and further, to establish in it an academy on the principle of those of Geneva, through which the youth of all countries in Europe had derived such important benefit. The commissioners chose the county of Waterford as the scene of the proposed colony. Of these gentlemen, the most active was Mr. D'Ivernois, since so well known in political literature, by the title of sir Francis D'Ivernois.

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Continental
occurrences.

While on the northern confines of the Alps, the dissensions of man were producing political separation; in that delightful country, which stretches from their southern frontiers, the discord of the elements caused a most tremendous natural convulsion. The portion of Italy which, from being a principal scene of Grecian colonies, was anciently known by the name of *Grecia Magna*; and in modern times bears the appellation of the Two Calabrias, suffered a succession of earthquakes, the longest, most dreadful and destructive to the face of the country, and to mankind, that was ever experienced in those regions. The first shock happened about noon on the 5th of February 1783, and was of all the most fatal; it came on suddenly, without any of the usual indications; it was about the Italian time of dinner, when the people were in their houses; but beyond all, the motion of the earth in that shock was vertical, rising suddenly upwards from its foundations, and as suddenly sinking again. By this fatal motion the greatest buildings, villages, towns, and entire cities were instantaneously involved in one common destruction; nothing remaining to be seen but vast heaps of undistinguishable ruins, without any traces of streets or houses. One of the towns and cities where the greatest devastation took place was *Casal-Nuova*, in which the princess *Gerafe Grimaldi*, with more than four thousand of her subjects, perished in the same instant. At *Baguara*, above three thousand of the inhabitants were lost. *Radicina* and *Palma* counted their loss at above three thousand each: *Terra Nuova* at about fourteen hundred;

hundred; and Semina at still more. The greater mischief was in Calabria Ultra, the extreme province of Italy next to Sicily. The inhabitants of Scylla sought refuge on the celebrated rock from its vicinity to which the town was denominated; and following the example of their prince*, descended to a little harbour at the foot of the hill, where getting into boats, or stretched upon the shore, they thought themselves free from danger. But in the course of the night, a stupendous wave, which is said to have been driven furiously overland, upon its return swept away the unfortunate prince, with two thousand four hundred and seventy-three of his subjects. The north-east angle of Sicily, including the city of Messina, were likewise in a considerable degree victims of that shock. But the greatest violence of its exertion, and its most dreadful effects, were in the plain on the western side of the Appennines; mountains were rent, vallies closed; the hills that formed them being thrown from their places, and meeting their opposites in the centre, the course of rivers was necessarily changed, or the waters being entirely dammed up, they were turned into great and increasing lakes†.

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* Many of the barons of the kingdom of Naples have the title of princes.

† The whole of the mortality, according to the returns made to the secretary of state's office in Naples, amounted to 33,567. These returns, drawn up in the confusion and misery that prevailed, could not be accurate; and it was supposed by the best judges, that the real loss, including strangers, amounted at least to 40,000. These estimates only take in immediate victims to the earthquakes; those who perished through want, diseases, anguish, and every species of subsequent distress, not being included.

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The earth in all that part of Italy continued for many weeks in a constant state of tremor; and several flocks, with different degrees of violence, were every day felt, so that the unhappy people, already worn down with calamity and grief, through the loss of their property and of their dearest relations, were still kept in a continual state of apprehension and terror. The king and government of Naples employed every possible means for both affording immediate relief to the sufferers, and assistance towards their recovery from the loss of their property. The archbishop of Reggio particularly distinguished himself for benevolence and charity. He disposed of his own furniture, equipages, and most productive moveables, and employed all the money he could raise to alleviate the distresses of his flocks. Having exhausted his pecuniary resources, he still, by infusing the cordial balm of sympathy, allayed those miseries which he could not remove. This truly christian pastor is not unworthy of being ranked with the celebrated bishop of Marseilles, as one of the numberless instances of the beneficent purposes to which recently reproached hierarchs applied their possessions.

CHAP. XXXI.

*Constituents and strength of the coalition ministry.—Combines genius, political experience, and aristocratical influence.—Meeting of parliament.—His majesty's speech—recommends to their consideration British India—commerce and revenue.—Mr. Fox's East India bill—object, to vest the whole affairs of the company in certain commissioners to be appointed by parliament, and administer commercial as well as territorial concerns.—Arguments for the bill.—The company is in a state of bankruptcy, and unfit to manage its own affairs.—The enormous abuses of its servants, and the distresses of India.—The bill is opposed by Mr. Pitt.—Arguments against the bill, that it is an infringement of chartered rights, without the justification of necessity—and the formation of an influence dependent on the present ministers.—By Mr. Dundas.—He charges Mr. Fox with aspiring at perpetual dictatorship.—Burke's celebrated speech on the extent and bounds of chartered rights.—Allegations against Mr. Hastings.—Petitions of the India company.—Bill passes the commons by a great majority.—Other corporate bodies petition against the violation of a charter.—Bill becomes obnoxious to the public.—Bill rejected by the lords.—Causes assigned by ministry for the rejection of the bill.—Alleged to be disagreeable to his majesty.—Reported interference through earl Temple canvassed in the house of commons.—Ministers dismissed their offices.—Character of Mr. Fox's East India bill—whether right or wrong, decisive and efficient—thoroughly adapted to its end, whether good or bad—tended to secure Mr. Fox's continuance in power, however that power might be used.—General outcry against Mr. Fox.—Impartial estimate of this political scheme.—Mr. William Pitt prime minister, with a minority in the house of commons.—Unpopularity of Mr. Fox and the coalition party.—Mr. Pitt's East India bill—rejected.—Question on dictation to the crown by
the*

the commons in the choice of a minister.—King, peers, and the public favourable to Mr. Pitt.—Attempt of independent gentlemen to effect an accommodation between the ministerial and opposition party.—Meeting for that purpose.—Correspondence with the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt.—Design proves abortive.—Display of Mr. Pitt's talents and character in resisting such a confederacy of genius and power.—Public estimation of the contending leaders.—The king declares his intention of taking the sense of his people.—Dissolution and character of this parliament.

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Constituents
and strength
of the coalition
ministry.

They combine
genius,
political ex-
perience,
and aristocratic
influence.

THE season now approached for the meeting of parliament: in the last session ministers had done little more than procure their appointments. They had proposed no important schemes of policy to ascertain their collective character; the public might conjecture what they would be, but could not yet know what they were. The coalition administration, it was obvious, had many symptoms of strength superior to that which was possessed by any ministry since the commencement of this reign. It combined the leading members of both parties that prevailed during the American war; united philosophy and genius with official experience; and to consolidate parts formerly heterogeneous into one mass, a great weight of aristocratic influence was superadded. Lord North retained many of his numerous supporters: Mr. Fox had a less numerous, but a still more able band of friends. The result of this union of genius, experience, rank, and property, was a majority seldom seen in favour of ministers from the time of the illustrious Pitt. The friends of this ministry conceived it to comprise all that was requisite to heal the wounds and restore
the

the prosperity of their country. Its opponents, from the character of its principal members, and especially its acting head, equally expected boldness, decision, and efficacy; but a mischievous, not a beneficial efficacy. They conceived the leaders of the two component parties, by their extraordinary junction, to have sacrificed all public principle at the altar of ambition. They apprehended, that by forcing themselves into the counsels of their sovereign, they had thereby infringed the kingly prerogative, and in it the British constitution. Having so interpreted the views and conduct of administration, they inferred, that their measures would be directed to the preservation and extension of their own power, instead of the good of the country.

Parliament assembled on the 11th of November, and soon afforded an opportunity of considering the schemes of administration. His majesty's speech was short, but extremely comprehensive; the definitive treaties of peace had been concluded; the important and extensive inquiries long carried on respecting India affairs, were pursued with diligence, and the fruit of them would be expected in the provisions of parliamentary wisdom, to maintain and improve the valuable advantages which we derived from our oriental possessions, and to promote and secure the happiness of the native inhabitants of those provinces. The season of peace would call for their attention to every possible means of recruiting the strength of the nation, after such a long and expensive war. One of the first objects of deliberation was the security and increase of the revenue in the manner which should be least burdensome to the subjects.

Meeting of parliament.

His majesty's speech recommends to their consideration British India, commerce, and revenue.

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subjects. Dangerous frauds had prevailed, and daring outrages were committed respecting the collection of the public revenue; and to prevent the continuance of such depredations, it would be necessary to adopt new provisions. The house of commons were informed of the reduction of all the establishments as far as prudence would admit, of the closing expences requisite at such a time, and reminded of the necessity of supporting the national credit.

The primary importance of these objects was undeniable; and an address consonant to the speech was unanimously passed in both houses. Mr. Pitt expressed his high approbation of the ends proposed by government, though he made some animadversions on the tardiness of ministers, in not having been farther advanced with measures for the accomplishment of such momentous purposes. On all these grand subjects, he counselled them to bring forward great, efficient, and permanent systems; as he highly applauded the ends which they professed to seek, he trusted the means which they would devise would be equally meritorious; in which case, they should have his warmest support. Mr. Fox, impressed with the very highest idea of Mr. Pitt's talents, declared, nothing could afford him more satisfaction as a minister, or proud exultation as a man, than to be honoured with the praise and support of Mr. Pitt *. He expressed very high approbation of the general principles which he had briefly sketched concerning the objects of their intended deliberation.

* Parliamentary Debates, 1783-4.

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He acknowledged, that India affairs could ill brook delay; through the industry and ability of their committee, however, the time which they had occupied was the means of affording parliament the most accurate and complete information; so that no assembly could be better acquainted with the subject on which they were called to deliberate: he concluded with announcing, that, on the 18th of November, he should propose a plan for the government of India.

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On the day appointed, Mr. Fox moved the house for leave to bring in a bill for vesting the affairs of the East India company in the hands of certain commissioners, for the benefit of the proprietors and the public; and also a bill for the better government of the territorial possessions and dependencies in India. In the former of these propositions, a preamble stated, that disorders existed and increased in the management of the British territorial possessions, revenues, and commerce, in the East Indies; which diminished the prosperity of the natives, impaired and threatened with utter ruin the valuable interests of this nation. The government of the present directors and proprietors was to be suspended; they were to be deprived of the whole administration of their territorial and commercial affairs; of their books, papers, documents, and their house in Leadenhall-street. The total direction of all their concerns, mercantile, financial, and political, was henceforward to be vested in seven commissioners; namely, William earl Fitzwilliam, the right honourable Frederic Montague, lord George viscount Lewisham, the honour-

East India
bill of Mr.
Fox.

Object, to
vest the
whole affairs
of the com-
pany in cer-
tain com-
missioners
to be ap-
pointed by
parliament;
and to ad-
minister
commercial
as well as
territorial
concerns.

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honourable George Augustus North, sir Gilbert Elliot, sir Henry Fletcher, and Robert Gregory, esq. These commissioners were to be appointed for the first time by the whole legislature; but afterwards by the crown: they were to hold their offices by the same tenure as the judges of England, during their good behaviour, and to be removed only by address from either house of parliament: they were to be assisted by seven directors; who should each possess at least two thousand pounds India stock, and have no mercantile concern with the company. The first seven were named in the bill: vacancies were to be supplied by a majority of the proprietors, on an open poll. Any or all of the assisting directors might be removed by five of the commissioners; and thus the commissioners were to hold the supreme direction and exclusive patronage of all India affairs. In the exercise of this immense power, they were required to come to a decision upon every question within a limited time, or to assign a specific reason for their delay. They must submit, once in every six months, an exact state of their accounts and establishments to both houses of parliament; they were never to vote by ballot, and must enter upon their journals the reasons of their vote. Such were the outlines of this celebrated bill. The proposed plan appeared to combine efficiency in the powers entrusted, openness in the required progress of its exercise, and responsibility that it should be employed for the intended purposes. If, therefore, the objects were beneficial to our Indian interests and to the whole British empire, and the persons chosen were

were completely qualified for executing the trust reposed, there can be no doubt that their powers were fully sufficient. This bill for the general management of Indian concerns, was accompanied by a second bill, the professed object of which was, to prevent all kinds of arbitrary and despotical proceedings from the administration of the territorial possessions; it defined the authority of the governor-general, suppressed all power of acting independently of his council, proscribed the delegation of any trust, and declared every existing British servant in India incompetent to the acquisition or exchange of any territory in behalf of the company; to the conclusion of any treaty of partition; to appoint to office any person removed for misdemeanor; to lend to native powers the company's troops; and to hire out any property to any civil officers of the company: it voided all monopolies, and declared every illegal present recoverable by any person for his own sole benefit. One part of the second bill particularly respected the zemindars or native landholders, secured to them an estate of inheritance, without an alteration of rents; and endeavoured to preclude all vexatious and usurious claims; to forbid mortgages, and to subject all doubtful demands to the examination and censure of the commissioners. It prescribed a mode for terminating the disputes between the nabob of Arcot and the rajah of Tanjore; and disqualified every person in the service of the company from sitting in the house of commons during the continuance of his employment, and for a certain specified term after his dismissal. As the scheme of Mr. Fox proposed to take away
from

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Arguments
for the bill.The com-
pany in a
state of
bankruptcy,
and unfit for
managing its
own affairs.

from the India company the management of the whole and every part of their own commercial affairs, as well as the territorial possessions, its author drew his arguments to support it from two sources: the embarrassed state of the company's finances; the durable and comprehensive abuses which had prevailed in the government of India. The distressed situation of the company's affairs he endeavoured to prove from the following circumstances: they had applied the preceding year to parliament for pecuniary assistance; they had asked leave to borrow five hundred thousand pounds upon bonds; they had petitioned for three hundred thousand pounds in exchequer bills; and for the suspension of a demand upon them, on the part of government, for seven hundred thousand pounds due for customs. By an act of parliament, the directors were prohibited from accepting bills beyond three hundred thousand pounds, drawn in India; yet, at this very time, bills to the amount of more than two millions were on their way from India for acceptance. Their actual debt was eleven millions two hundred thousand pounds; and they had stock in hand, towards paying this immense incumbrance, only to the amount of about three millions two hundred thousand pounds. The result of this comparison was a balance against them of eight millions; a deficiency which was extremely alarming, when compared with the capital of the proprietors. He would not hesitate to declare the company actually bankrupt: if they were not assisted, they must unavoidably be ruined; and the fall of a body of merchants so extensive in their

their concerns, and so important in the eyes of Europe, must necessarily give a very alarming blow to our national credit. Parliament must permit the acceptance to be made, and interfere for their support; but it would be absurd in itself, and unjust to the nation, for legislature to grant them succour, without taking for the public security the total direction of their pecuniary affairs. This was an interference not only wise but absolutely necessary. Concerning the abuses that prevailed in the government of India, he began with the conduct of the company at home, the nature of their connection with their officers abroad, the conduct of the servants in general, and of Mr. Hastings in particular, elucidated from the reports of the committee. The plan which he proposed would, he contended, prevent the recurrence of such abuses, promote the prosperity of the British Interests, and change the condition of the natives from oppression and misery to security and comfort.

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The enormous abuses of its servants, and distresses of India.

The first, most strenuous and powerful opposer of the bill was Mr. Pitt. The reasons which he urged against it were reducible to two general heads. "The proposed scheme," he said, "annihilated chartered rights, and created a new and immense body of influence, unknown to the British constitution." He admitted that India wanted reform; but not such a reform as broke through every principle of equity and justice. The bill proposed to disfranchise the members, and confiscate the property of the East India company; it required

The Bill is opposed by Mr. Pitt.

Arguments against the bill, that it is a violation of chartered rights without the justification of necessity;

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and the formation of an influence dependent on the present ministers.

directors, trustees chosen by proprietors for the behalf of those constituents, and under their control, to surrender all lands, tenements, houses, books, records, charters, instruments, vessels, goods, money, and securities, to persons over whom the owners were to possess no power of interference in the disposal of their own property; on what principle of law or justice could such a confiscation be defended? The rights of the company were conveyed in a charter expressed in the clearest and strongest terms that could be conceived. It was clearer, stronger, and better guarded in point of expression, than the charter of the bank of England; the right by which our gracious sovereign held the sceptre of these kingdoms, was not more fully confirmed, nor farther removed from the possibility of all plausible question. The principle of this bill once established, what security had the other public companies of the kingdom? What security had the bank of England? What security had the national creditors, or the public corporations? or, indeed, what assurance could we have for the great charter itself, the foundation of all our privileges, and all our liberties? The power indeed was pretended to be created in trust for the benefit of the proprietors; but, in case of the grossest abuse of trust, to whom was the appeal? To the proprietors? No; but to a majority of either house of parliament, which the most drivelling minister could not fail to secure with the patronage of about two millions sterling given by this bill. But the proposition was still more objectionable in another way, it was calculated to increase the influence

ence of the minister to an enormous and alarming degree. Seven commissioners chosen ostensibly by parliament, but really by administration, were to involve in the vortex of their authority the whole treasure of India. These poured forth like an irresistible torrent upon this country, would sweep away our liberties, and all we could call our own.

By Mr.
Dundas;

Mr. Dundas argued, that the immediate tendency of the bill was so far from being to increase the influence of the crown, that it must inevitably overbear its power: it created a fourth estate, which would overturn the balance of the three established by the constitution. The opposers of the bill proceeded to attack its author's motives. Mr. Fox was a man of the most splendid ability, the most intrepid and daring spirit, and unbounded ambition. He professed himself a party-man, and it was a leading article in his political creed, that Britain ought to be governed by a party: to perpetuate such a government was the design of the present scheme. This bill exhibited all the most prominent features of its author's character and sentiments: its end was perpetual dictatorship to himself; the projected means were the whole influence of India possessed and exercised by the members and agents of a party which were totally at his devotion. The motives of the coalition were before easily divined; new success encouraged them to unfold their intentions, and their designs became fully manifested. To force his way to the supreme direction of his majesty's government, Mr. Fox had coalesced with those statesmen whom he had uniformly professed to reprobate; he headed

who charges
Mr. Fox
with seeking
perpetual
dictatorship.

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them in censuring that peace, which, in less trying circumstances, he uniformly professed to recommend; and thus found an opportunity of attaining the power which he through that coalition sought. His views extending as he advanced, he now proposed to make his power perpetual and uncontrollable. Such was the opinion which Messrs. Dundas and Pitt, and their supporters, delivered concerning Mr. Fox's East India bill.

Burke's celebrated speech on the extent and bounds of chartered rights.

The combined force of philosophy, eloquence, and poetry, was employed by Mr. Burke, in supporting this grand project of his friend. A considerable portion of his own reasoning was exerted to controvert the arguments drawn from the annihilation of the company's charter: he admitted, to the fullest extent, that the charter of the East India corporation had been sanctioned by the king and parliament; that the company had bought it, and honestly paid for it; and that they had every right to it which such a sanction and such a purchase could convey. Having granted this position to the opponents of the bill, he maintained, that notwithstanding that sanction and purchase, the proposed change ought to take place. He proceeded on the great and broad grounds of ethics, arguing that NO SPECIAL COVENANT, HOWEVER SANCTIONED, CAN AUTHORISE A VIOLATION OF THE LAWS OF MORALITY; if a covenant operate to the misery of mankind, to oppression and injustice, the general obligation to prevent wickedness is antecedent and superior to any special obligation to perform a covenant: parliament had sold all they had a right to sell,—an exclusive privilege to trade; but not a privilege to rob and oppress;

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oppress ; and if what they disposed of for the purposes of commerce was made the instrument of oppression and pillage, it was their duty, as the guardians of the conduct and happiness of all within the sphere of their influence and control, to prevent so pernicious an operation. After laying down this as a fundamental principle, he proceeded to argue, that there had been, and were, the most flagrant acts of oppression in India, by the servants of the company ; that the whole system was oppressive from the beginning of the acquisition of territorial possessions : he entered into a detail of the principal instances of rapine, violence, and tyranny, which were attributed to the English ; and dwelt with superior energy and pathos on those acts of which he alleged Mr. Hastings to be guilty. No one undertook to deny, as an abstract proposition, that charters or any covenants contravening the principles of morality, and bringing misery on mankind, ought to be annulled ; but the allegation was denied respecting the charter of the East India company. THE BILL, it was affirmed, PROPOSED CONFISCATION WITHOUT PROOF OF DELINQUENCY. The proprietors and directors petitioned the house that their securities and property might not be forfeited without evidence of criminality. They desired, that before the house passed a bill which would act as a condemnation, they should prove the guilt. One reason adduced by Mr. Fox for the proscription of their rights was, that they had mismanaged their own affairs, and were insolvent ; they denied the alleged bankruptcy, and offered to prove by a statement of their demands

Allegations
against Mr.
Hastings.

Petitions of
the India
company.

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The bill
passes the
commons by
a great ma-
jority.

and effects, that though somewhat embarrassed, their assets far exceeded their debts; and prayed their situation might be fully inspected before a bill, proceeding on an assumption of their being bankrupts, should be passed. LET NOT, they said, A PARLIAMENTARY DOCKET BE STRUCK WITHOUT GIVING US AN OPPORTUNITY OF CONVINCING EQUITY THAT WE CAN PAY EVERY CREDITOR TWENTY SHILLINGS IN THE POUND. The remonstrating entreaties of the company, and all the opposition in the house of commons, were unavailing: on the 8th of December, the bill passed the house by the large majority of two hundred and eight to one hundred and two*. The next day Mr. Fox, attended by a great number of members, presented the bill at the bar of the house of lords. When it came to the peers, it met, if not with an abler opposition, with a much more numerous in proportion to the number of the assembly. Great force of eloquence and reasoning were exerted on both sides; rarely indeed was there a fuller attendance, and perhaps never did a greater assemblage of ability display itself in our

* In the closing debate on this bill in the house of commons, Mr. Flood, a very eminent orator in the Irish parliament, lately chosen a member for Winchester, first spoke in the British parliament. Emphatic in his delivery, both pompous and vehement in his manner, he appeared rather to demand than to solicit the attention of the house. Such a mode of elocution, however valuable the matter might be, and cogent the arguments, certainly exposed the speaker to ridicule. This engine was very happily played upon him in the poignant wit, keen and strong satire of Mr. Courtney; who, without invalidating his opponent's arguments, silenced the oratory of Mr. Flood in the British house of commons.

house

house of lords, than on so momentous a question, that engaged, on the one side, an able body of peers headed by lord Thurlow and lord Camden; on the other a no less able body, headed by lord Loughborough and lord Mansfield. In the house of commons, however, the arguments on both sides had been so completely exhausted, that little novelty appropriate to the question could be brought forward even by such powers of genius. Lord Thurlow spoke to the attack on Hastings, which had been repeated in the house of peers. If (said he) he be a depopulator of provinces, if he be a plunderer, and an enemy to the human race, let his crimes be dragged into the light of day, and let him be punished, but not condemned without a trial *. Meanwhile, the bill had begun to produce a con-

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* Mr. Hastings (he said) was one of the most venerable characters that this country had produced: he had served the East India company for thirty-three years, and twelve years as president at Bengal. He possessed a most extensive knowledge of the languages, the manners, the politics, and the revenues of Indostan. He was a man whose integrity, honour, firmness of mind, and perseverance, had encountered difficulties that would have subdued the spirit of any other man, and had surmounted every obstacle; no impediment, no opposition, could have been more formidable than that of the commission, which seemed to have been sent out for the express purpose of thwarting and opposing all his measures. When he considered the scene of confusion that ensued, the factious and personal spirit by which these men had been animated from the hour of their landing, he sincerely wished they had died before they had set foot in India. But Mr. Hastings had been able to overcome so arduous a trial, and such was the vigour of our government in Bengal; such were the regulations for the administration of justice in the provinces, and such the æconomical arrangements formed by the civil and military departments, that he did not

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Other corporate bodies petition against the violation of a charter.

The bill becomes obnoxious to the public;

is rejected by the lords.

Causes assigned by ministers for the rejection of the bill.

a considerable alarm in the country. Other bodies now followed the example of the East India company, in petitioning against a measure which they considered as an atrocious violation of private property. In the house of peers the opponents of the bill proposed to defer its consideration for several days, until they should have time to receive more adequate information; its supporters were very urgent for the speedy completion of the scheme; but, the former prevailing, it was deferred. The bill was now become extremely obnoxious to the public; the majority of the house of peers exhibited the sentiment of a much greater proportion of a majority of the nation. The people appeared to have adopted a totally different opinion from the house of commons*. The motion for a second reading took place on the 15th, and the house being adjourned to the 17th, the question was put for the commitment, and carried against the minister by a majority of ninety-five to seventy-six; and thus Mr. Fox's celebrated India bill, after passing the house of commons, was rejected by the lords. The conduct of the peers which, in voting contrary to the house of commons, concurred with the popular voice, was represented by the ministerial party as arising not from conviction, but an extrinsic influ-

believe it would be in the power of the folly and ignorance of the most favourite clerks Mr. Fox's directors could send out, to throw Bengal into confusion in the term that was assigned for the duration of his bill. See Parliamentary Debates, Dec. 1783.

* See a periodical paper of those times, entitled, the Political Herald, which was edited by the elegant pen of Godwin, but supported by the abler pen of Gilbert Stewart, and frequently invigorated by the masculine strength of Wm. Thomson.

ence.

ence. His majesty, on investigating the nature, tendency, and probable consequences of the bill introduced by Mr. Fox, was understood to be inimical to its adoption. It was conceived, that the more our king reflected on the subject, he was the more deeply impressed with the mischievous effects of the scheme in question, that he thought it would overturn the balance of the constitution ; and that under such an impression, he very freely delivered his sentiments to counsellors whom he did not think members of the coalition confederacy. Among those who enjoyed the greatest degree of the royal confidence was earl Temple, a nobleman of considerable talents, high character, and an ample fortune ; totally unconnected with any party junto, and thereby not only capable, but most probably disposed, to give the best advice. A report prevailed, that in a private conference with his majesty, this nobleman, with the candour and honesty of a faithful and conscientious counsellor, had delivered his sentiments to the king ; and that they coincided with those which the illustrious personage himself entertained. The report farther added, that the opinion of his majesty having been communicated to various peers, had influenced their votes. The clamour against such advisers was revived by ministry ; and it was asserted that, but for these, a majority in the lords would have forwarded the bill proportionate to that which had carried it through the house of commons. This rumour respecting the interference of the sovereign, was never authenticated ; it however was believed by the supporters of the bill, and deemed the means of its rejection.

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The bill alleged to be disagreeable to his majesty.

Reputed interference of lord Temple,

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is canvassed
in the house
of com-
mons.

rejection. The reports were considered by the coalition party of so great importances, as to be the foundation of several resolutions. On the 17th of December, the coalition speakers expatiated on secret influence, which, according to their assumption *, still existed. Mr. William Baker made a motion, seconded by lord Maitland, importing, that it was now necessary to declare, that to mention any opinion, or pretended opinion of the king, upon any bill or other proceeding in either house of parliament, with a view to influence the votes of the members, was a high crime and misdemeanor, derogatory to the honour of the crown, a breach of the fundamental privileges of parliament, and subversive of the constitution of the country. Mr. Pitt argued on the impropriety of a legislative assembly proceeding on unauthenticated rumours; that monster, public report, was daily fabricating a thousand absurdities and improbabilities; and it was the greatest sarcasm upon every thing serious and respectable, to suffer her to intrude on the national business, and for the house to follow her through all her shapes and extravagancies. He was asked, how ministers were to act when circumvented, as they complained of having been, by secret influence, and when the royal opinion was inimical to their measures? In his judgment, their duty, in a situation thus dishonourable and inefficient, was obvious and indispensable? The moment

* Authentic and impartial history must consider the assertion concerning secret influence, as an assumption, because the allegation was neither admitted nor proved.

they

they could not answer for their measures, let them retire: the servants of the crown were worse than useless whenever they were without responsibility. Mr. Fox endeavoured to prove, that the present resolutions were necessary to mark the independence of parliament; and to decide whether it was to be governed by the wisdom and free choice of its members, or by the dictates of the crown. Taking for granted the existence of secret influence, he exercised his eloquence in describing the evils which it would produce. We are (he said) robbed of our rights, with a menace of immediate destruction before our face: from this moment farewell to every independent measure. Whenever the liberties of the people, the rights of private property, or the still more sacred privileges of personal safety, are vindicated by the house, the hopes of the public, anxious, eager, and panting for the issue, are to be whispered away, and dispersed to every wind of heaven, by the breath of secret influence. A parliament thus fettered and controled, instead of limiting, extends beyond all limit and precedent the prerogative of the crown, and has no longer any use but to register the degrees of despotism, and the arbitrary mandates of a favourite. Thus, according to Mr. Fox, the constitution of England was to become despotical, if the house of commons did not reprobate a secret influence which rumour * only alleged

* The report was, that a circular card, supposed to have been written by lord Temple, had been transmitted to various peers, purporting his majesty's disapprobation of Mr. Fox's bill, as subversive of the power and dignity of the crown.

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Ministers  
are dis-  
missed.

to exist. A majority of one hundred and fifty-three to eighty voted for the resolution.

The conduct of his majesty evidently demonstrated that he was not only extremely averse to the East India bill, but highly displeased with its author. On the 18th of December, at twelve at night, he sent a message to the two secretaries of state, intimating that his majesty had no farther occasion for their services, and directing that the seals of office should be delivered to him by the under secretaries, as a personal interview would be disagreeable. Early the next morning letters of dismissal, signed Temple, were sent to the other members of the cabinet. Immediately the places of first lord of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer, were conferred on Mr. William Pitt; lord Temple received the seals as secretary of state; and earl Gower was appointed lord president of the council. On the 22d lord Temple resigned the seals of his office, and they were delivered to lord Sidney, as secretary of state for the home department; and to the marquis of Carmarthen for the foreign. Lord Thurlow was appointed high chancellor of Britain; the duke of Rutland, lord privy seal; lord viscount Howe, first lord of the admiralty; and the duke of Richmond, master-general of the ordnance; Mr. William Grenville, and lord Mulgrave, succeeded Mr. Burke in the pay-office; and Mr. Henry Dundas was appointed to the office of treasurer of the navy.

Character  
of Mr. Fox's  
East India  
bill:

Thus terminated the coalition administration, owing its downfall to Mr. Fox's East India bill. In  
whatever



whatever light we view this celebrated measure, we must allow it to be the effort of an expanded and towering genius. Whether the object was beneficial or injurious, the means were great, comprehensive, and efficacious. If, with its framer and supporters, we consider the East India company as guilty of the grossest misconduct in the administration of their affairs; as having brought themselves to a state of insolvency, and thus rendering it necessary for their principal creditor to interfere for his own security, and to prevent them from utterly ruining themselves, the plan was efficient: the company could no longer mismanage their affairs, for Mr. Fox left them none to administer. What the author said of the whole bill, applies to it with great truth: IT WAS NO HALF MEASURE. If the territorial concerns of the company had been so madly, wickedly, and destructively administered by the company's weakness and corruption, and the vices of its servants, the powers proposed by Mr. Fox to be conferred upon his seven friends, rendering them sole, supreme, and complete directors of British India, were thoroughly adequate to every purpose of correction of misconduct, prevention of abuses, and punishment of malversation: his provisions for the zemindars tended most effectually to give to those landholders the security of British subjects. The opponents of the bill, while they reprobated its tendency and design, fully admitted that extraordinary exertions of genius had been employed in adapting it to its end. Considering it as intended to make its seven executors lords of so great a part of the British empire, and its inventor

imperial

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whether  
right or  
wrong, de-  
cisive and  
efficient:

thoroughly  
adapted to  
its end,  
whether  
good or bad:



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fitted to se-  
cure to Mr.  
Fox con-  
tinuance in  
power, how-  
ever that  
power might  
be used.

imperial master of the whole, they allowed, that in its general principle, and in its particular provisions, relations, and dependencies, it was most skillfully, ingeniously, and completely fitted to establish in these realms, the government of an oligarchical confederacy, headed by Charles James Fox. Impartial history, without entirely adopting the opinion of either party, must see and exhibit in this plan a most forcible efficacy, that might operate in two ways: on the one hand, as its supporters asserted, it was thoroughly calculated for preventing the recurrence of such evils as had been recently prevalent: and on the other, it was no less obviously and directly fitted to confer on Mr. Fox and his connections, a power new in the British constitution, far surpassing that which had before belonged to any body or estate under our polity, and without that control on which has depended, and depends, the integrity and efficacy of our several establishments and our political system. Concerning Mr. Fox's motives, the historian, like every other observer of human conduct, will infer intention according to the nature and tendency of the measure, compared with the circumstances of the case, and character of the agent. Examining the scheme, knowing that the ambition most frequently prevalent in great minds occupied no inconsiderable share of Mr. Fox's heart, and perceiving the bill so well framed to gratify that passion, he will not hesitate to assign the love of power as one of the motives. Aware, however, that an inventor, ardent in the promotion of a scheme which has occupied his affections and faculties, and engaged in

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contemplating its direct and immediate adaptation to proposed ends, may overlook more indirect operations, or more distant consequences; he may conclude, that Mr. Fox did not view, in their whole extent and force, the effects which, unless arrested in its course, the project might have produced. The most probable account which impartial candour can present concerning this important subject of history, appears to be the following: Mr. Fox had acceded to the whig doctrine of governing this country by an aristocratical confederacy. Conscious of his own extraordinary talents, and desirous of that power which would have employed and displayed them, he expected and sought to be leader of an administration which should be supported by such a combination. The sovereign he well knew was averse to a party government. The misfortunes of the war having rendered the ministry of lord North very unpopular, the whig combination came into power. Finding, in the promotion of lord Shelburne, a deviation from the plans which the whigs had delineated, Mr. Fox and his party resigned. Their own combination not being sufficient to secure them the direction of public affairs, the whig party joined another, before hostile; and from their combined powers, forced the practical adoption of their maxim of ruling by a confederacy. Aware of the disagreeableness of such a ministry to him in whom the constitution vested the choice of executive servants, and naturally apprehending that he would avail himself of an opportunity to exert his own free choice, Mr. Fox, in framing his bill, appears to have endeavoured to guard  
against



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Outcry  
against  
Mr. Fox.

against the probability of such an event. The permanence of Mr. Fox's connection in administration, would evidently be a morally certain effect of his bill; and, therefore, may fairly be assigned as one of its principal objects. Mr. Fox's opponents illustrated their conceptions of his scheme, by comparing him to Oliver Cromwel, Julius Cæsar, Catiline, and other celebrated projectors of usurpation. But an attentive consideration of his character, dispositions, and habits, and, above all, his uniform conduct, by no means justifies the charge of *solitary* ambition. Social in private life, Mr. Fox has always courted association in politics; ambitious of sway, he has sought not only to acquire it by, but to enjoy it with, a party. Besides, had he been ever so desirous of the solitary dominion of protector or dictator, he must have known, that in Britain he never could have attained so uncontrolled a power. His sagacity would not have suffered his designs so very far to outgo every probability of success. Confining the proposed schemes of this great man somewhat near the bounds of probable execution, the historian may fairly venture to affirm, that he intended, by his India bill, to secure the continuance of power to himself, his whig confederacy, and their new allies; and that the whole series of his conduct was a practical adoption of the doctrines of his friend Mr. Burke, in his "Thoughts on the Discontents," exhibiting all the beauties of poetry and depth of philosophy, to minister to party politics, and applying the energies of his genius, the stores of his wisdom, and the fascination of his fancy, to shew that Britain, disregarding the choice of the king, or the talents of the subject,



subject, ought to be governed by a whig association. On the whole it is evident, that one of the chief objects of the coalition was, to establish the united parties in the management of government. It is no less manifest, that the East India bill both tended, and was designed to secure to the confederacy the continuance of power. So far impartial history must concur with the opponents of the illustrious Fox. But the reasonableness of the censure, and even obloquy which he thereby incurred, is much more questionable. That Mr. Fox loved power is very obvious, and abstractly neither deserving of praise nor censure. There is little doubt that he was not the minister of the king's predilection and personal choice. The appointment of his executive servants is certainly by the constitution vested in his majesty; but various cases have occurred in the history of England, in which it was not only requisite, but necessary, for the king, in the exercise of his prerogative, to sacrifice private prepossessions to general good: such an event has happened, and always may happen under a free constitution, of which the object is the welfare of the community. The court doctrine at this time, that Mr. Fox and his adherents merited the severest reprobation, *because* they wished to administer the government contrary to the inclination of the king, is by no means obviously true. The unbiassed historian must consider the question on the broad grounds of expediency. Had or had not Charles James Fox, in his parliamentary and executorial conduct, shewn such intellectual talents, such force, energy, and decision of mind, as would have rendered him a momentous accession to the counsels of the nation, when the state of af-

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Impartial  
estimate of  
this political  
scheme.



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fairs required the exertion of the greatest abilities which it contained. Those who thought that he had manifested such talents and qualities, were, by patriotic duty, bound to support the continuance, or attempt the restoration of his power. Mr. Fox, though not thirty-five years of age, was an old senator: for ten years his wisdom, viewing situation and conduct, had predicted events and results with an accuracy almost prophetic. His lessons as a statesman, he had received from moral and political science, thorough conversancy with the British constitution, government, and interests, impressed more forcibly on his mind by practical contemplation of the errors of systems, the insufficiency of plans, and the imbecility of execution, followed to their fatal effects. *For only eleven months and a quarter*, in two cabinets, had he been minister. With the marquis of Rockingham, he, in four months, had pacified and enfranchised the discontented and oppressed Ireland; he had prepared for terminating a ruinous war; and had promoted retrenchment of the expenditure, which was so burdensome to the nation. In the coalition ministry, he had persevered in promoting economical regulations, which were so much wanted; and had begun successfully to move stagnant commerce. His India bill, even if admitted to be wrong in its object and principle, yet was certainly grand, comprehensive, and efficient. If there was error, it arose, not from the defect of weakness, but the excess of strength. It displayed a range of survey, a fertility and force of invention, a boldness and decision of plan, an openness and directness of execution, that stamped its author as a man of sublime genius, who fearlessly unfolded and published his concep-



conceptions. The impartial narrator, using the best of his judgment, must disapprove of the infringement of charters \*, at least till proof was established that their objects had been violated, or deem the new power created greater than was either necessary for its purpose, or consistent with the balance of the constitution; but must acknowledge, that its territorial operation would have been thoroughly and immediately efficacious. The perspicuity of the whole, and every clause, manifested the extent and bounds of the delegated power, defined the mode of its exercise, and the open responsibility under which the trust was to be discharged; and in marking the line of duty, shewed the unavoidable consequences of transgression; by precluding the probability of unpunished guilt, it tended to prevent the recurrence of oppression; ascertaining the tenure, and securing the rights of property, it would stimulate industry, and render British India infinitely more productive to the proprietors and nation, besides diffusing comfort and happiness to the natives, so long the objects of an iniquity which was disgraceful to the British name. These were the benefits which must have obviously resulted from the plan of Mr. Fox. The confiscation of charters could only be defended on the ground of necessity, and Mr. Fox had not evinced that necessity, and was therefore precipitate and blameable in

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\* I have been informed by a member of the party that some very eminent senators belonging to it, especially a gentleman who has since risen to be one of its heads, privately advised Mr. Fox to leave the commercial management to the company. If that advice had been followed the chief ground of popular reproach would have been prevented, and Mr. Fox might have continued to be minister.



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proposing to proceed upon an assumption, in a case of so high an importance both as to policy and justice. But his propositions on this part of the subject did not necessarily imply unfair intentions. The influence which must have accrued to the confederacy might have been formidable to the constitution, but if it proved so, its dangers must have arisen from the legislators, the guardians of our polity, as to these the proposed commissioners were to be amenable. The new influence might increase ministerial majorities in parliament, but great means of such an augmentation must have arisen from any plan for taking the territorial possessions under the direction of the British government. His East India scheme, both in itself and in combination with his other acts, and the series of his conduct, displayed those talents and qualities, which, when joined, place the possessor in the highest rank of statesmen, and shew him fully competent to render to his country the most momentous services. The plan itself is of a mixed character, and liable to many strong objections; yet the impartial examiner will not easily discover, in the whole of this scheme, reasons to convince him, that *because Mr. Fox proposed this plan for governing India, it was beneficial to the country to be deprived of the executorial efforts of his transcendent abilities.* The historian, unconnected with party, and considering merely the will and power of individuals or bodies to promote the public good, must lament what truth compels him to record, that a personage equalled by so few in extent of capacity and force of character, in fitness for benefiting the nation, during a political life of thirty-five years, should have been enjoyed as a minister by



by his country only *once for three months and a half, and again for seven months and three quarters,* The situation of the empire required the united efforts of the greatest political abilities, but Britain was not destined to possess the executorial exertions OF BOTH her most consummate statesmen.

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By the dismissal of ministers the country found itself in a new situation, about to be governed by an administration, which a very powerful majority in the house of commons thwarted. The new prime minister was a young man in the twenty-fifth year of his age, supported by no family influence, or political confederacy; having no adventitious props; resting solely on his own ability, aided by those whose admiration and confidence his intellectual and moral character had secured; without any means of extending his influence and increasing the number of his friends, but those to be found in his own head and heart. If talents, integrity, and conduct, could not create a general confidence and support, which might overbear a particular combination, he must fall. The splendid fame of the father, it is true, had spread an early lustre round the son; but hereditary glory would have little availed against such a host, without similar virtues. Able individuals supported him, but against so compact and strong a phalanx, little would have been their weight, unless invigorated, directed, and led by extraordinary talents. The majority in the house of commons was very great, and there was little prospect of its being materially reduced. It was obvious that no ministry could be of long duration, without the support of a house of commons: it was

Mr. William Pitt prime minister, in a minority of the house of commons:

the tenure of his office, his personal talents and character, without adventitious aid.



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readily perceived, that either ministry or parliament must be dissolved. The consequences of a dissolution depended simply upon the prevailing sentiment throughout the nation. Mr. Burke has remarked, that the house of commons ought to be *an express image of the opinions and feelings of the people*. If in the present case such a sympathy existed between representatives and constituents, dissolution could answer no purpose, as a majority friendly to the coalition must be returned; but Mr. Fox's party appeared not to entertain sanguine hopes from such an appeal.

Unpopularity of Mr. Fox and the coalition.

Having endeavoured to the best of my judgment to exhibit the conduct of Mr. Fox and his supporters as it really was, it is necessary, in order to shew the connection of events, to exhibit the impression which it had made on the majority of the people; as that impression, much more than the real merits of their policy, produced their permanent exclusion from the councils of their sovereign. A comprehensive biographer, who should view the whole conduct and character of Fox, estimate excellence and defect, and strike an impartial balance, after allowing grounds of censure, must unquestionably perceive that there remained an immense surplus of subject for transcendent admiration. But perhaps there never was an eminent man whose actions and character, viewed in partial and detached lights, could lead an observer to grosser misconception of the whole. Both his private and public life were of a mixed nature. The most sublime genius, the most simplifying and profound wisdom, did not preclude the indulgence of propensities,



sities, and the recurrence of acts, diametrically opposite to reason and sound judgment. Ardent benevolence and patriotism did not prevent the encouragement, by both precept and example, of practices and habits injurious to the individual, and, according to the extent of their influence, prejudicial to the public welfare. Just and honourable himself, his amusements and relaxations promoted vices tending to render their votaries unjust and dishonourable. In every part of his conduct, Mr. Fox was extremely open; if there was ground of blame, it must be known, as no endeavours were used for concealment. His supereminent excellencies could be apprehended but very vaguely and indistinctly, unless by comparatively few; but his faults were obvious to the most vulgar examiners. As the multitude of all ranks and denominations were incompetent to form a judgment of such a man themselves, they took up their opinions upon the report and authority of others; these were favourable or unfavourable according to the sentiments and wishes of their authors. Where his enemies were the teachers of the opinions, in partial views of his conduct, they found plausible grounds of censure and obloquy. Besides the foibles of his private life, his public conduct afforded ample materials to advocates, who chose to assail his reputation. From the time that the American war, by the losses which it produced, and the burdens which it imposed, brought home to the experience and feelings of the people, became unpopular, the most ardent and powerful promoter of peace was regarded as the



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patriot who was to extricate his country from impending ruin. His popularity became still higher, as he procured a vote for the discontinuance of the war, and expelled the obnoxious ministers from the councils of the king. Under the government of the whigs, the people expected the empire to recover its ancient splendor, and themselves their former comforts and prosperity. The reforming and improving acts of the Rockingham administration confirmed this opinion. When, on the appointment of lord Shelburne, Mr. Fox withdrew his abilities from the councils of his country, many began to be staggered in their conviction of his patriotism: but when the coalition took place, the gross and undistinguishing multitude was satisfied, that a junction between two parties and two men formerly so hostile, must be bad and mischievous in itself. Its able opponents saw, that the mere junction was neither good nor ill, but that the justness of censure must depend on the objects and subsequent conduct of the confederacy; yet aware, that this reasoning was too refined for the comprehension of the multitude, with great skill, dexterity, and effect, they re-echoed, “*the monstrous inconsistency of the coalition*”; and when its members came into administration, impressed great numbers of the people with a belief, that a ministry so formed must be unprincipled and worthless, however able and powerful. The receipt-tax drawing hourly on their pockets, though in so petty sums, teased and fretted their minds already fore. The East India bill, in its objectionable parts, the infringement of charters, and the forcible interference in the administration of a  
mer-



mercantile company's affairs, was perfectly intelligible to the most common apprehensions; shocked the ideas of a trading people, and suggested probable cases, which by obvious analogies could be brought home to their own feelings; whereas the benefit that might accrue to British India and its native inhabitants, much less attracted their attention, affected their imaginations, or interested their passions. A plain farmer, manufacturer, or tradesman, could easily conceive the hardship of having his affairs subjected to trustees not chosen by himself, when he knew or believed himself to be solvent, and competent to the administration of his own concerns; while the benefit that might accrue to the inhabitants of Hindostan were not likely to make a very deep impression on his mind. In Mr. Fox's East India bill, the real or probable evils, like the defects of his general character, were manifest to a common understanding; but its real or probable benefits, like the excellencies of his general character, required comprehensive views, penetrating sagacity, and great abilities, to estimate and appreciate. Mr. Fox himself, and his supporters, ardent in pursuing their great scheme, though they anticipated, and, at least, with uncommon ingenuity controverted in parliament\*, the principal objections that were urged; yet they did not sufficiently regard the impression made out of parliament by these objections, until it was too late. Mr. Fox in this as in many other measures, attending to what was

\* See Burke's speech on chartered rights.



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Classes  
hostile to  
Mr. Fox.

great and momentous, overlooked various particulars which, though apparently little, were really important. His enlightened mind valuing the literature for which he himself and many of his supporters and coadjutors were so eminently distinguished, and aware of the importance of the press as a political engine, had secured the ablest contributors to periodical publications \*.

But these efforts of genius were not directed to the objects wherein assistance was chiefly wanted: they were addressed to scholars, statesmen, and philosophers, instead of the great mass of the people, among whom an alarm against the coalition was spreading itself so widely. The opposite party, with more dexterous skill, disseminated writings which simplified arguments or allegations to the comprehension of the multitude, and impressed their feelings. In running the race of popularity, the anti-coalitionists, by skilful direction to the goal, surpassed the forcible and energetic movements of the coalitionists deviating from the course. Many of the independent land-holders †, merchants, and manufacturers, partook of the alarm, and tended to increase it through the nation; that great and opulent body, the dissenters, were, with few exceptions, inimical to the coalition, and this their principal scheme. All those who were privately or domes-

\* See the magazines and newspapers of the time, and also the Political Herald.

† A treatise by sir William Pulteney, very vigorously written, was powerfully efficacious in impressing on the public a detestation of the plan, and a dread of its author.

tically



tically dependent on the king, attached to his person, and desirous of gratifying his wishes; all who by habit, predilection, or office, were more connected with the splendor of the court than the politics of the cabinet, were inimical to a party which they conceived or knew to be disagreeable to the sovereign. But the principal source of popularity to the anti-coalition party, was the character of its juvenile leader, who was conceived equal to Mr. Fox himself in talents; known to be so much superior in moral habits; free from the imputation of vice or of political inconsistency; and presumed, from his character and conduct, more likely to apply with undeviating constancy to public business, and with more steady patriotism to seek the national good, than a personage whose extraordinary abilities might be interrupted or perverted by his foibles and propensities, the connections and associates which these generated. The character and habits of Mr. Pitt were much more favourable to the promotion of confidence among the monied men than those of his opponent, and in his late defence of chartered rights he was regarded as the champion of mercantile corporations, which enhanced his popularity among individual capitalists. There was a class of men distinguished by the title of the king's friends, emanating, according to the whig hypothesis, from the secret influence junto, which during so great a part of the reign had been conceived to exist, and to direct public and more ostensible politicians. To these the Rockingham party, which they considered as a hostile phalanx, was much more disagreeable than the band which,  
after



after the death of Chatham, was headed by earls Temple and Shelburne. Mr. Pitt, as a member of the Temple party, was much more agreeable to these courtiers than Mr. Fox, member of the whig party. He had not joined the whig administration of 1782, and in 1783 had spoken and voted with those that were understood to occupy the greatest share of royal favour. Pleasing and engaging as Mr. Fox's manners are, yet his character is too open, and perhaps too unguarded, for the reserve and caution indispensable at courts, where a Mrs. Mafham may overturn a Marlborough. Mr. Pitt resembling Fox in the highest talents for the great politics of the cabinet, somewhat surpassed him in the secondary politics of the court. Though too independent and dignified for the habitual suppleness of a mere instrument of splendor, yet prudent as well as able, he had the address and concealment of a skilful courtier. To this statement of comparative personal virtues, a retrospect of their fathers, allowing the just merit to the one, but attributing unproved demerit to the other, produced, with the multitude, a great additional influence in favour of Mr. Pitt \*. From all these causes, the tide of popularity ran so high in favour of the new ministers, as to render an appeal to the nation desirable to them, and hurtful to their adversaries.

\* The *two pair of portraits*, by Mr. Horne Tooke, with the greatest pungency and force converge this kind of argument; but in point of justness, resemble the labours of an arbitrator, who debiting one side without allowing any credit, and crediting the other without charging any debit, should publish the result as an award exhibiting a fair balance of accounts.



But such a measure was not immediately practicable with safety to the country; supplies were urgently wanted for the public service, and could not be deferred till the meeting of a new parliament. The majority in opposition could refuse the supplies, in order to retard dissolution. The land-tax bill was then pending; the 20th of December, the day after the change of ministry, had been appointed for the third reading; the majority, however, agreed to put off its consideration. On the 22d, the house sat as a *committee on the state of the nation*: a resolution was moved by Mr. Erskine for an address to his majesty, to state the alarming reports of a speedy dissolution; mentioning the territorial and commercial affairs of the India company as requiring their immediate attention; and praying his majesty to suffer them to proceed on the important business recommended to them in his speech from the throne; to hearken to the voice of his faithful commons, and not to the secret advices of persons who might have private interests of their own, separate from the true advantage of the king and his people. His majesty's answer, delivered on the 24th of December, admitted the urgency of the subject stated in their address, and pledged the royal promise, not to interrupt the house, either by prorogation or dissolution. The majority was not satisfied with this answer of the king, which appeared to them to afford no certain prospect that his majesty would long abstain from exerting the prerogative vested in him by the constitution. They therefore proceeded with precautions against this event: by an AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT, the lords of the treasury were empowered



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empowered to permit, at discretion, the directors to accept bills from India: the house of commons passed a *resolution* to prohibit the lords of the treasury from accepting any more bills from India, till the company should prove to that house that they had sufficient means for their payments, after having discharged their current demands, and the debt due to the public. The amount of this prohibition was, that the house of commons assumed to itself the power of suspending an act of parliament. On the 26th, the house adjourned to the 12th of January: during the recess, each party was employed in strengthening itself, and in forming its political measures. When parliament was assembled, Mr. Fox moved, that the committee on the state of the nation should be resumed. After several subordinate motions, a resolution was proposed, that, in the present situation of his majesty's dominions, it was peculiarly necessary there should be an administration which had the confidence of that house and the public. In this motion his majesty's name had been omitted. Mr. Dundas, in order to point out the real spirit of the resolution, as well as the actual state of the case; and, that not the confidence of one branch, but the whole legislature was requisite to ministers; proposed an amendment, substituting, instead of the words confidence of *this house and the public*, "confidence of the crown, the parliament, and the people:" the amendment was rejected, and the original resolution was passed. Another proposition was immediately adopted, to the following purport: "that the late changes in his majesty's councils had been preceded by



by dangerous and universal reports, that the sacred name of the king had been unconstitutionally used to affect the deliberations of parliament; and that the appointments made were accompanied by circumstances new and extraordinary, and such as did not engage the confidence of that house." This resolution manifestly referred to the report concerning earl Temple: it occasioned a very warm debate, which contained much personal invective, and repeated all the arguments for and against both parties: the resolution was carried in the affirmative.

On the 14th of January, Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding the majority in favour of opposition, introduced a bill for the better government and management of the affairs of the East India company. His scheme proposed the appointment of commissioners by his majesty, from the members of his privy council, who should be authorized and empowered from time to time to check, superintend, and control, all acts, operations, and concerns, which related to the civil or military government, or revenues, of the territorial possessions. Two members of the said board should be the chancellor of the exchequer and the secretary for the home department; the board should have access to all the papers of the company; and the court of directors should deliver to the board copies of all the proceedings of both courts of directors and proprietors; copies of all dispatches received from the company's servants in India, and the instructions sent and proposed to be sent to India, relating to the civil or military government, or revenues of the British territorial possessions. The court of directors should pay due

Mr. Pitt's  
East India  
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obedience to the orders of the board, respecting civil and military government and revenue; the board, in a limited time, were to return the copies which were received, with their approbation, or disapprobation, of the proceedings communicated; or proposing amendments if they found them unsatisfactory. The board was fully to state their reasons, and also their farther instructions, to be sent to India without delay. Should the directors conceive any of the orders of the board to be extra-official, in not relating to the civil, military, and financial government of India, to which the bill was limited, they should apply, by petition, to his majesty in council, concerning such injunctions; and the decision of the council thereon should be final and conclusive. The nomination of the commander in chief should be vested in his majesty, and that officer should always be second in council. The king should also have the power of removing any governor-general, president, and members of the councils of any British settlements in India; all vacancies in their offices should be supplied, subject to his majesty's disapprobation, that might be repeated until one was chosen whom he should approve. No order or resolution of any general court of proprietors should have power to revoke or rescind, or affect any proceeding of the court of directors, after his majesty's pleasure should have been signified upon the same. Such are the outlines of Mr. Pitt's scheme for the government of India. A great and leading difference between this project and the plan recently rejected by the lords is, that the former  
left



left the charter untouched, and the commercial concerns of this corporation of merchants under the sole management of the proprietors themselves and the directors of their choice. The company itself was so thoroughly convinced of their charter not being wantonly infringed, that they approved \*, as proprietors and directors, both of its principle and regulations. By the former bill, the entire transfer of the company's affairs to commissioners nominated in parliament, and the permanent duration of their authority for a term of four years, had occasioned great alarm, as creating a new power dangerous to the constitution. The object of the present bill was merely control. In supporting his own proposition, Mr. Pitt expressed his high admiration of that part of Mr. Fox's scheme which respected the zemindars, but he disapproved general indiscriminate confiscation. He proposed, therefore, that an inquiry should be instituted for the purpose of restoring such as had been irregularly and unjustly deprived, and that they should be secured against violence in future. These last provisions were not included in the bill which he had prepared for the consideration of the house, but they formed a part of his general ideas for the reformation of India. Mr. Fox argued against this bill, as inadequate to the correction of the enormous abuses which pervaded the administration of British Indostan. The bill, by continuing the powers of the court of directors, and rendering them dependent for their

\* See proceedings of the courts of directors and proprietors, in January 1784.



existence upon the proprietors, had no tendency to eradicate any mischief, or to obtain any valuable improvement; the connection between both and their servants abroad, that had been the source of so many evils, would still continue. The governor-general was to have the same powers of internal regulation as before, and which had produced so great and manifold abuses. But this bill provided the remedy of recal; and of what value was this remedy? Did not all the officers of state, whether political or military, depend upon the governor-general? Would they not regard him therefore as one in whose official existence they were peculiarly interested? Would they not, if he should chuse to be refractory, strengthen his principles of disobedience? The governor-general must be more than man to withstand so potent a temptation, surrounded and fortified by a variety of individuals in every department of life, who owed their existence to him; it was not the orders of a body of men, however respectable, that were in a great measure unconnected with the country wherein he resided, that could control his conduct. Mr. Pitt's scheme would throw a great mass of patronage into the hands of the crown. It tended (Mr. Fox said) not to remedy any of the evils which had subsisted for so long a time, or to put a period to those barbarities which had stigmatized and rendered infamous the character of Britain in the annals of India. If adopted, the company might, as in former instances, replenish their letters with moral precepts, but our eastern possessions would be irrecoverably lost to this country. To these objections it was replied,



plied, that Mr. Pitt's bill had all the efficiency necessary to correct abuses, prevent their recurrence, and improve our interest in India, without infringing the rights of private property, or creating a new power in the empire inconsistent with the established constitution. Acknowledging the defects of the present government of India, it was intended to lodge a principal share of the executive power where it ought to be vested. It shewed the utmost tenderness to the privileges of the company, and would produce that happy and desirable mixed government, which every friend to the immunities of a great commercial association, and every supporter of our free constitution, would cheerfully welcome. Though it attributed new powers to the monarchical branch of our polity, yet were they so circumscribed, that they could not, in the hands of the most abandoned prince, be converted into instruments of mischief and oppression; these arguments did not avail, and Mr. Pitt's bill was rejected by a majority of two hundred and twenty-two to two hundred and fourteen.

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is rejected.

Meanwhile addresses were pouring in from all quarters to the sovereign, to testify the highest satisfaction at the dismissal of the coalition ministry, and the appointment of the administration headed by Mr. Pitt. The coalition party, the more they heard the voice of the public, the more they laboured to retard an event which would be an appeal to the opinion and sentiments of their constituents. While Mr. Pitt's India bill was pending, Mr. Fox proposed to defer the second reading of the mutiny bill until the 23d of February, and thus procure a respite for a month; and the motion was adopted. It was immediately followed by another, which asserted, that

Addresses  
against the  
coalition  
party.



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Question on  
dictation to  
the crown  
by the com-  
mons, in the  
choice of a  
minister.

the continuance of the present ministers in trusts of the highest importance and responsibility, was contrary to the principles of the constitution, and injurious to the interests of the king and his people. In support of this motion, the coalition leaders did not attempt to establish delinquency: the arguments proceeded from an assumed principle, that a minister ought not to continue in office without the support of the house of commons: this was the basis of their reasoning, and unless it was firmly founded, all the superstructure must fall to the ground. If the position was true, its truth was to be ascertained either by positive law, or by general and admitted practice. By the constitution the king has the power, as chief executive magistrate, of choosing his own officers (unless under specific disqualifications, not imputed in the case in question) for performing the several branches of the executive duties. The house of commons has a right to impeach, on the ground of malversation in office, any of the ministers; but not to prescribe to the king in his choice of a minister. As the majority of the commons did not attempt to *prove* that they possessed a constitutional right of dictation to the crown respecting the choice of its officers, the weight of their arguments rested entirely on the *authority* of the superior numbers of commoners.

The king,  
lords, and  
the public  
are favour-  
able to  
Mr. Pitt.

It may be proper to estimate the exact amount of this authority, in order to ascertain how far it was right or wrong, wise or unwise in government, to admit or reject it as a rule of conduct, when unsupported by law and precedent. Of the commons, two hundred and five against a hundred and eighty-four, voted that the minister ought not



to continue in office, because he was not trusted by the house of commons. The house of lords, on the 4th of February, took this business into consideration; and the earl of Effingham moved two resolutions; the first referring to the proposition of the house of commons, prescribing the restriction of the lords of the treasury from consenting to the acceptance of bills from India: secondly, to the vote of January the 16th, against the continuance of the present ministers in office. His lordship proposed, that the house should resolve, first, that an attempt in any one branch of the legislature to suspend the execution of law, by separately assuming to itself the direction of a discretionary power, was unconstitutional: secondly, that by the known principles of this constitution, the undoubted authority of appointing to the great offices of executive government was solely vested in the king; and that that house had every reason to place the firmest reliance in his majesty's wisdom in the exercise of this prerogative. The lords in opposition endeavoured to justify the interference of the house of commons, on the ground of expediency, founded on particular circumstances of the case which the act of parliament could not foresee. It was, they said, intended to prevent the India company from contracting engagements for two millions sterling, to the prejudice of the public, their principal creditors. Lord Thurlow insisted that this was a peremptory order, which the house of commons had no right to issue in contravention of the law of the land. If he had been a lord of the treasury he would not have obeyed the resolution of the house of commons; and would have refused

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compliance on this plain principle, that nothing short of an act of parliament, formally passed by the three states of the realm, had the power of suspending any part of the statute or the common law of England. The chief subject of controversy was the second resolution. The supporters of Mr. Fox deprecated the dissension which the proposed interference must excite between the peers and commons; justified the commons on the ground of general expediency; and insisted that the house of commons, by the spirit of the constitution, had a right to control the choice of a minister. The ministerial lords, especially the chancellor, denied the existence of any such right, and challenged its assertors to establish it by proof. In this attempt their arguments not being satisfactory, a majority of a hundred to fifty-three of the peers voted for lord Effingham's resolutions and consequent address. The majority of the peers consisted of almost two to one in favour of the kingly prerogative of choosing his own servants. The majority of the commons, for rendering the exercise of that executive power dependent on the arbitrary will of one branch of the legislature, was only about ten to nine. The nation in general manifested its wishes in favour of the minister chosen by the crown. Thus, if the authority of opinion was to determine whether the present minister should or should not continue in office, (and the house of commons adduced no other argument), there was on the one hand the opinion of a small majority of the house of commons, on the other the opinion of a great majority of the house of peers, and evidently of by far the larger portion of



of the nation, and the choice of the king. While, however, there was a majority of the house of commons; that majority, be it ever so small, was the house, and no minister could retain his situation thwarted by the house. The king, ministry, and public, saw that the present majority in the house of commons did not represent the opinion, sentiments, and wishes of their constituents. It was resolved not to succumb to dictatorial mandates that could not be enforced : Mr. Pitt, on the 18th of February, informed the house that the king had not, in compliance with the resolution of the commons, dismissed his ministers, and that the ministers had not resigned. Mr. Fox, persisting in his assumed principle, contended that by retaining the ministers after the disapprobation of the house had been signified, the crown had degraded the representatives of the people to the lowest insignificance. Mr. Pitt insisted that there was no attempt to degrade the house of commons, or to infringe any of its rights ; but merely an endeavour to prevent it from usurping the right of another branch of the legislature. It was apprehended that opposition, finding no other hopes of success, would refuse the supplies : but Mr. Fox, bold and adventurous as he was, appears to have been averse to a measure which would throw the country into such disorder.

While the opposite parties were engaged in contentions so detrimental to public business, impartial men desired a coalition which should comprehend the chief talents of both sides, and produce a sacrifice of private competition to the public welfare : retain the abilities of Mr. Pitt and lord Thurlow

Attempt of independent gentlemen to effect an accommodation between the ministerial and opposition parties.



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Meeting for  
that pur-  
pose.Correspon-  
dence with  
the duke of  
Portland  
and Mr.  
Pitt.

in the councils of their country, and join with them the abilities of Mr. Fox and lord Loughborough; and disregarding either court predilections or whig confederacies, should chuse for the various offices men most qualified and disposed for discharging their respective duties. With this view, a considerable number of independent gentlemen met at the St. Alban's tavern on the 26th of January, and drew up an address recommending an union of parties. This being signed by fifty-three members of the house of commons, was presented by a committee to the duke of Portland and to Mr. Pitt. The duke of Portland answered he should be happy in obeying the commands of so respectable a meeting, but that the greatest difficulty to him was Mr. Pitt's continuance in office. Mr. Pitt expressed his readiness to pay attention to the commands of so respectable a meeting, and co-operate with their wishes to form a stronger and more extended administration, if the same could be done consistently with principle and honour. In the farther progress of the discussion, the duke of Portland proposed as a preliminary step, that Mr. Pitt should resign in compliance with the resolution of the house of commons. Mr. Pitt declared that it was inconsistent with his principles and sentiments to resign his ministerial capacity in the present circumstances. The duke of Portland proposed the same preliminary repeatedly in different forms; but Mr. Pitt still declared it inadmissible, and the duke of Portland insisted on it as an indispensable step; the negotiation, therefore, was suspended. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt expressed their sentiments to the house;



house: both appeared impressed with a sense of the benefits that might accrue from an united administration, but neither would relinquish their respective principles. Mr. Fox insisted, that it was unconstitutional in Mr. Pitt to hold his place after such a vote of the house of commons; that therefore he must resign. Mr. Pitt insisted, that it was not unconstitutional, and would not consent to resign: resignation would be the virtual admission of a control in the house of commons, which he denied them to possess. The reciprocal communications between the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt had been hitherto carried on through the committee at the St. Alban's tavern. Still anxiously earnest to compass the desired union, these patriotic members proposed that his grace and the minister should have a conference; and that his majesty should send a message to the duke, desiring that he and Mr. Pitt should have an interview for the sake of forming a new administration. A message was accordingly sent to the duke of Portland, intimating his majesty's earnest desire that his grace should have a personal conference with Mr. Pitt for the purpose of forming a new administration on a wide basis, and on fair and equal terms. Before his grace would agree to the proposed meeting, he required an explanation of the term *equal*. Mr. Pitt replied that a personal conference would best explain specific objects; but the duke of Portland not being satisfied with this answer, refused to confer, and his refusal put an end to the negotiation.

The design  
proves abortive.

The address for the removal of ministry was presented to the king on the 25th of February. His majesty



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majesty in reply declared it to be the object nearest his heart, that the public affairs should be conducted by a firm, efficient, united, and extended administration, entitled to the confidence of his people, and such as might have a tendency to put an end to the unhappy divisions and distractions of this country. He had employed very recent endeavours to unite in the public service, on a fair and equal footing, those whose joint efforts he thought the most fitted for producing so happy an effect : his endeavours had failed : he should be happy to embrace every measure most conducive to such an object, but could not perceive it would be forwarded by the dismissal of his present ministers. His majesty observed, that no charge or complaint was suggested by the house against those officers of the crown, whose removal they solicited ; that no specific objection was made to any one or more of his servants ; that great numbers of his subjects had expressed their warmest satisfaction with the late changes made in his councils : in these circumstances, he trusted, his faithful commons would not wish the essential offices of the executive government to be vacated, until there was a prospect that the desired plan of union could be carried into effect. The commons repeated their address in a more detailed form, and with still more urgent solicitation for the removal of ministers. His majesty's reply contained opinions and sentiments of the same important tendency as his former ; and in the same temperate, firm, and dignified spirit, repeated the cogent and unanswerable argument ; " You require, the removal of my ministers, without alleging any charge



charge of delinquency." Finding every attempt unavailing to induce the sovereign to sacrifice his choice of servants highly approved of by his people, to the mere will of the coalition party, unsupported by any constitutional reasoning, Mr. Fox proposed what he termed a representation, but really was a remonstrance, to the sovereign; stating the privileges and power of the house, and the ancient practice of withholding supplies until grievances were redressed; and explaining the evils that would accrue to the country if they exercised this right; that necessity only could justify its exertion; that such a necessity, arising from his majesty's advisers, did exist; and that the measures originating with these advisers, were altogether contrary to the principles and maxims by which the illustrious house of Hanover had reigned over this free country, in such harmony with the people, such prosperity and glory: for whatever consequences might result from the necessity imposed on the house of commons to assert its own rights, the advisers of the crown were responsible. The commination intimated, in this statement being carried only by a majority of one, opposition did not think it advisable to contend for the refusal of the supplies. Their superiority had been gradually decreasing, and they saw that if they attempted so strong a measure, they would be out-voted, and that the house of commons would at last concur with the majority of the nation. They became more and more sensible of their great and increasing unpopularity; and from this time, on the 9th of March, they appeared to have considered themselves as conquered. The opposition



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Display of  
Mr. Pitt's  
talents and  
character in  
resisting  
such a con-  
federacy of  
genius and  
power.

Public  
estimation  
of the con-  
tending  
leaders.

position leaders had proposed, as a preventive of a dissolution, to move a short mutiny bill; but this design they now relinquished, and suffered the act to pass for the usual term; and all parties prepared for a speedy dissolution of parliament.

Thus terminated a contest between a powerful confederacy in the house of commons, and the executive government, supported by the confidence which the nation reposed in the talents and character of the principal minister. The coalition party defended the ground which it had assumed, and attacked administration with a force, impetuosity, concert, and perseverance, which must have overborne any minister, who did not unite abilities to see the means of defending a constitutional tenure, skill to apply them, and firmness to persist in maintaining what he conceived to be right against any combination of adversaries. A minister less powerful in reasoning, would have yielded to allegations so confidently urged, to sophistry so plausibly supported, or even to the very authority of such illustrious names. A minister, however endowed with intellectual superiority, unless also resolutely firm, would have rather conceded what he knew to be right, than maintained a contest with so numerous, forcible, and well-disciplined a host, though he knew them to be wrong. Without a third advantage, a high degree of estimation with the public, success might have been uncertain. On the side of Mr. Fox there were consummate ability, intrepid boldness, fortified by a special confederacy. On the side of Mr. Pitt, there was consummate ability and firmness, and unquestioned character, which



which was fortified by no special combination, but increased, extended, and enlarged that general connection which wisdom, virtue, and appropriate fame rarely fail to attach to a senator or statesman among an informed, distinguishing, and free people. Mr. Fox, though transcendent in genius, sought power by means which, during the two preceding reigns, had exalted several ministers of no genius. Mr. Pitt secured public confidence, and acquired power, by personal qualities. But every impartial well-wisher to his country, while he rejoices that Britain acquired the executorial services of a Pitt, must not less regret that she lost the executorial services of a Fox.

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While the chief attention of parliament had been occupied by these momentous subjects, several matters of subordinate importance were transacted. The receipt-tax, meritorious as a financial measure, and productive without being burdensome, was, notwithstanding, very unpopular; and a motion was made for its repeal. Several substitutes were proposed; and among the rest, sir Cecil Wray moved a tax on *maid servants*, which produced laughable strictures rather than any serious consideration. The receipt-tax was continued, and new penalties were annexed to enforce the imposts. A committee was appointed for inquiring into illicit practices to defraud the revenue; and Christopher Atkinson, esq. having been convicted of perjury, was expelled the house of commons. Previous to the dissolution of parliament, his majesty judged it expedient, in the particular circumstances of the case, to announce his intention of recurring to the

The king declares his intention of taking the sense of his people.

sense



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sense of the people, and the reasons in which that intention was founded. His speech, as compressing the sentiments, opinions, objects, and motives of our sovereign, respecting the momentous subjects of the narrative just finished, is highly deserving of full citation: it was to the following effect: "My lords and gentlemen, on a full consideration of the present situation of affairs, and of the extraordinary circumstances which have produced it, I am induced to put an end to this session of parliament. I feel it a duty which I owe to the constitution and to the country, in such a situation, to recur as speedily as possible to the sense of my people, by calling a new parliament. I trust that this means will tend to obviate the mischiefs arising from the unhappy divisions and distractions which have lately subsisted; and that the various important objects which will require consideration, may be afterwards proceeded upon with less interruption, and with happier effect. I can have no other object, but to preserve the true principles of our free and happy constitution, and to employ the powers entrusted to me by law for the only end for which they were given, to the good of my people." On the 24th of March, parliament was prorogued, and the next evening it was dissolved by proclamation.

Dissolution

and character  
of this  
parliament.

Thus ended, in its fourth year, a parliament, than which few assemblies either witnessed more changes in the executive administration, or exhibited a greater change of political character. The members had been elected at a season, when the recent disturbances of 1780 repressed the spirit of opposition to government, from the apprehension, that



that if suffered to prevail, it might generate a discontent, eventually productive of similar outrages; and at a time when the sanguine hopes from unusual success obliterated former miscarriages. Disappointed expectation soon revived dissatisfaction, and the parliament which had been most devoted to lord North, became eager and active to drive him from his ministerial situation. The administration of lord North had been followed by the appointment of a set men, from whom many of their countrymen expected the nation would derive signal benefit; but these hopes were overturned almost as soon as they were raised: the untimely death of lord Rockingham, and the unhappy misunderstandings that succeeded, speedily demolished the fabric. The administration of lord Shelburne passed almost entirely during the recess of parliament. It fell unfortunately to his lot to negotiate the terms of the general peace, which was signed at Versailles on the 20th of January 1783. Upon the assembling of parliament, this measure was the first object of their deliberations, and was judged to deserve a strong and severe censure. Those who had been most hostile at the commencement of parliament, now became most closely united. The professed friends of prerogative, and professed champions of the people, formed a coalition, which in the third session of parliament established the fourth ministry. An imputed pursuit of perpetual dominion, in eight months, drove this party from power; and an early period of the fourth session saw a fifth ministry. Half of the fourth year was not passed when this body was dissolved. Having begun



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begun with the most obsequious assent to every requisition of ministers, it ended with questioning the the most necessary prerogatives of the crown. Its character being stamped by its successive leaders, for two sessions it exhibited the dextrous but temporary expedients, the indecisive policy and indulgent profusion of lord North. In its third year, before the two parties were fully cemented and ability assumed its native superiority, it displayed a mixture of temporising and decisive politics. In its fourth year, the supremacy of Mr. Fox being now established, its measures bore the stamp of the energy, promptness, decision, and adventurous boldness of that eminent statesman.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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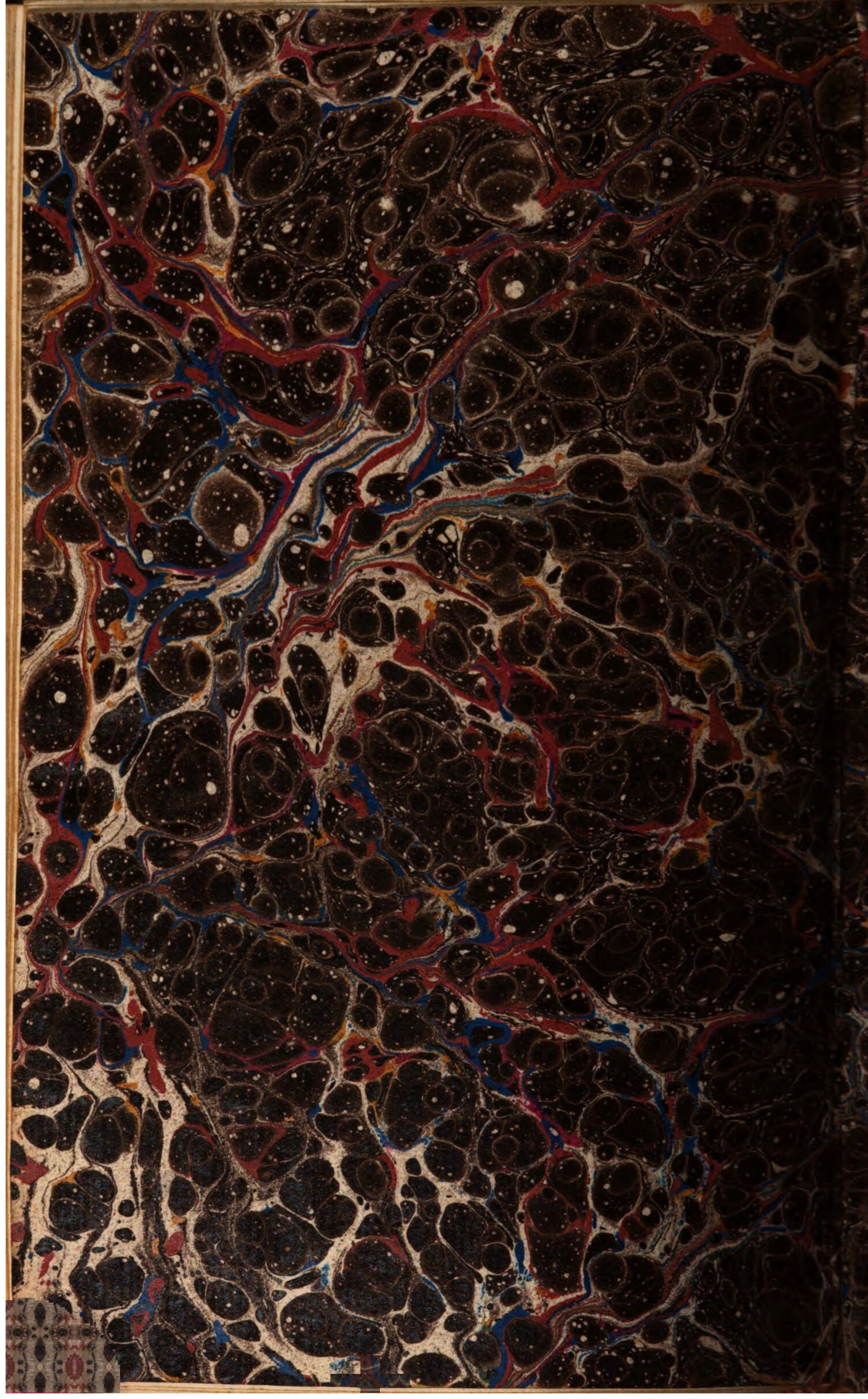




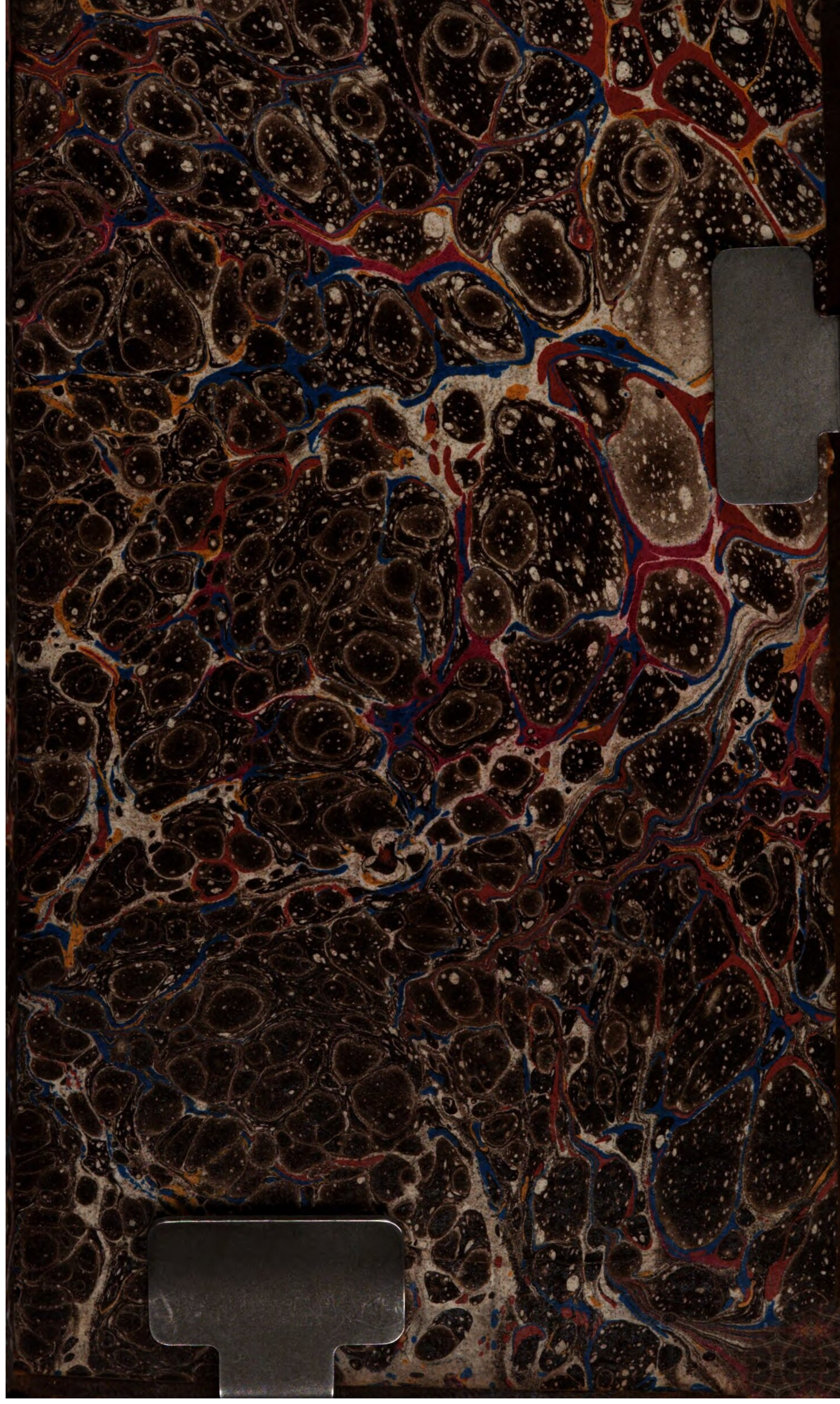


















Bisset, Robert

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